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‘Who is anti-American ?’:
The British Left and the United States, 1945-1956

by

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Abstract

The subject of this research is British 'anti-Americanism' in the decade after 1945: a complex phenomenon with often contradictory political and cultural manifestations. This study focuses primarily on the attitudes towards the United States of the organized political Left, because the Left came to be regarded in this period as the most 'anti-American' element in British political life.

Examining that charge, this study follows the development of attitudes towards the United States in British political life, particularly within the Labour Party, long-established as the most serious organized force on the Left, and the governing Party from 1945 to 1951. The study aims to show that hostile responses towards the United States on the British Left imbibed the same national resentments which could be found in other quarters of British political life. The British Left had its own set of ideological and emotional prejudices which gave a distinct colour, and perhaps added impetus, to its resentments. However, underpinning all the hostile sentiments was the resentment of Britain's postwar domination and displacement by the United States, which among Conservatives was concealed only by the onset of the Cold War, until it forcefully erupted during the Suez crisis.

Finally, this study delineates and examines the great concern with which 'anti-Americanism' was viewed at the time by policy-makers and politicians on both sides of the Atlantic. Such manifestations of British prejudice and hostility seemed to threaten the stability of the Anglo-American Cold War alliance, and as a result anti-anti-Americanism became a powerful emotion in British political life. This study demonstrates and considers the anti-anti-American plans made by Whitehall, Washington, and the Atlanticist faithful, of which there were many in the Labour Party too, to promote in Britain a positive image of the United States as a people - and as Cold War allies.

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Chapter One: Introduction

‘Anti-Americanism’ has been widely acknowledged as a deeply-rooted feature of postwar British politics and culture.¹ Yet important as it may have seemed to contemporaries from the 1940s to the present day, no comprehensive study has been made of ‘anti-Americanism’ in Britain, in particular when compared to the amount of research carried out on the same phenomenon in postwar France.²

‘Anti-Americanism’ usually gets only a brief mention in studies of Anglo-American relations or British social and cultural life, confined to paragraphs or footnotes. Few articles treat it as a subject in itself.³

The lack of research into British ‘anti-Americanism’, however, is less surprising considering the elusive nature of the subject, which crosses the boundaries of different fields of historical or sociological research and interpretation. Quantitative methods are rather limited in assessing how large and heterogeneous groups such as nations relate and view each other.⁴ The study of ‘anti-Americanism’ thus tends to resort to a qualitative exploration of images of the American people, or the American nation. Some of these images, in fact, have shown remarkable durability over the centuries ever since the discovery of the American continent - which the United States eventually came to symbolize and dominate - shocked the physical and the mental boundaries of European politics and thought. Images of ‘America’, some based on experience and some based on fantasy, have made their way into numerous European works of literature and art, saying as much about European hopes and fears as about American realities.⁵ Fixed stereotypes have emerged, notes Pascal Ory, that ‘admirers’ and ‘detractors’ have both employed, lending

them only a different meaning: youth or immaturity, idealism or hypocrisy, freedom or lawlessness - to mention but a few.⁶

The United States, of course, has not been an impassive object in this process. Since its foundation, the Republic across the Atlantic has been consciously responsible for presenting itself as a land of hope and refuge, and an exemplary model of social justice. In these transatlantic polemics, as C. Vann Woodward has pointed out, the United States defined itself in opposition to class-ridden Europe. 'In sheer vituperation', he has written, 'few anti-Americans of any time or country could hold their own with the anti-Europeans of America in their prime.'⁷ A great deal of this, of course, was aimed at Britain, the Old Country whose political authority was directly rejected in a bloody revolution and whose economic influence and cultural snobbery continued for many years to be the source of anger, and target of abuse, for American patriots and aspiring politicians.⁸

American nationalism, however, provides only part of the American contribution to the transatlantic debate. Much of the fault-finding and the disparagement of American society associated with 'anti-Americanism' - in Britain and elsewhere - has been performed by Americans themselves with a zest that foreigners could not easily match. That Americans were 'the most timorous, snivelling, poltroonish, ignominious mob of serfs and goosesteppers ever gathered under one flag in Christendom since the end of the middle ages', was the verdict of no other than the proud American nationalist H L. Mencken, a scourge of British condescension who could nevertheless describe his own nation as a 'Commonwealth of third-rate men', peopled not by 'the hardy adventurers of legend, but simply by incompetents who could not get on at home.'⁹ Could any British writer

have penned more scathing remarks? American self-criticism has indeed supplied foreign critics with ample ammunition. 'In the past twenty years', a Dutch writer commented in 1983, 'the United States exported anti-Americanism just as it did Coca Cola'¹⁰ But if misgivings expressed by Americans about their own country or people are to be adjudged as 'anti-Americanism' too¹¹, then this is equally true for the last two hundred years.

In the second half of the twentieth century, 'anti-Americanism' has indeed become such a widely-used and loosely-applied term in and outside the United States that it begs definition. The 'Americanism' which it negates, David Strauss has observed, was 'a set of values, practices, and institutions which had their origin in the United States ... Hence, anti-Americanism was a philosophy, ideology, or institutional framework based on assumptions and principles which ran counter to the Americanist position.'¹² In this context, the United States often became a target in what were, primarily, domestic European debates. In the heated polemics on political reform in nineteenth century Britain, for example, radicals were wholly laudatory about the values and virtues of American Democracy while Tory aristocrats, alarmed at the impact of American democratic ideals, were already complaining by 1860 about the 'Americanization' of Britain.¹³ While initially the United States was a rather remote entity across the Atlantic, in the twentieth century it has emerged as the most powerful nation on earth. Within the context of American global hegemony the more recent use of 'anti-Americanism' appeared, according to Strauss, to denote 'sharp criticism of American policies, frequently resulting in violent demonstrations against the symbols of American power abroad.'¹⁴ As these symbols can be an American air base, a Ford Motor factory or

a Coca Cola bottle, the political, the economic and the cultural are all closely related. American global influence has been evident in all these spheres, in certain respects not unlike British gun-boats, merchants and Bibles in the nineteenth century, which were hardly more popular outside Britain.

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British fears of American influence were apparent, however, even at the so-called height of British power.¹⁵ Perceptive British observers since Adam Smith had noted the potential prowess of the American continent being realized in the process of rapid industrialisation and economic growth which the United States had been undergoing since the end of the Civil War.¹⁶ America was the main 'menace' to 'the commercial preeminence of England', commented Gladstone in 1878, and America 'at a coming time, can, and probably will, wrest from us that commercial primacy.... We have no more title against her than Venice, or Genoa, or Holland, has had against us.'¹⁷

The first manifestations of a wide-spread British alarm date from as early as the turn of the twentieth century when Britain was still, after all, the largest Empire ever known in history and the City of London was the acknowledged global centre of finance and investment. Yet the mood of self-congratulation exhibited during Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 soon evaporated as the limits of British power - and her lack of popularity abroad - were exposed by the Boer war. And thus when American products suddenly appeared to be flooding British markets, and American investors started seeking outlets in British business and industry, the

sudden challenge from the expanding American industrial economy 'assumed the appearance of a sustained assault.'¹⁸ A 'Made in USA' scare erupted in 1901 and dire warnings were issued about the threat of the 'American invaders'.¹⁹

To be sure, American industrial and commercial methods were greatly admired in some business circles.²⁰ The 'tariff reformers' led by Joseph Chamberlain - the former radical regarded as the most 'American' in his style of British politicians²¹ - used the American (and German) example of protective tariffs to propagate Imperial self-sufficiency²². to fend off the American challenge itself. American ways and methods, however, drew excited objections from Britain's social and intellectual elite, who decried the cultural consequences of the American industrial success story and called on Britain to reject the American example, as much as the American challenge.²³ The 'Americanization' of the British press became a favourite theme to describe the increasing focus on the 'personal' and 'sensational' in British newspapers; especially the cheap Northcliffe newspapers aimed at a working-class mass-audience; the direct importation of cultural products from the United States - stage plays, musical bands, and the new cinematic organ of mass entertainment - was condemned for its corrosive impact on social values, public morals and the English language.²⁴ Arguments against American imports, even the 'invasion' of Britain's upper classes by rich American brides, would always be sharpest in Britain where they had, or could be given, a cultural or moral edge²⁵

That fervent calls for economic and cultural protectionism to halt the American 'invasion' were made in the midst of the first significant rapprochement between the Governments of both nations since the American Revolution, was a paradox that would characterize much of Anglo-American relations during the twentieth

century. After nearly a century in which British pre-eminence had been safely protected by the superiority of the Royal Navy, Britain was searching for friends in an increasingly hostile world, and the United States, remote from the 'struggle for mastery' in Europe, seemed one obvious place to begin. Recent disputes over borders in the Western Hemisphere were at once resolved and British politicians and writers implored the Americans to gain their own imperial conquests in order to spread the influence of Anglo-Saxondom around the globe.²⁶

Nothing seemed more natural than closer relations in view of the racial 'Anglo-Saxon' theories current among the leading British politicians of the day, or when race became less intellectually fashionable, the stress on cultural ties between the 'English-Speaking peoples' sharing a common law and language. Expressed by Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries - Tories such as Balfour and Chamberlain, Liberals such as Asquith and Grey²⁷ - these beliefs would continue to influence British foreign policy-makers throughout the twentieth century. D.C. Watt has identified these 'basic doctrines and assumptions of English pan-Anglo-Saxonism' as, the unquestioning identification of British and American leadership, the naive assumption that British leadership would be welcome and acceptable, the identification of Anglo-American hegemony with the achievement of universal peace, and the optimistic idealism about the influence of a united Anglo-American opinion as a deterrent against the use of force to upset the world *status quo*.²⁸

This strand of thought was never as dominant in the United States 'Anglo-Saxonism' had a dubious appeal to other immigrant populations and even the Anglo-Protestant East Coast political elite were often highly suspicious of British imperialism - and entanglements in the Old World. Britain's firm alliances were

eventually signed with France and Russia; and when the United States came into the Great War on Britain's side as an 'associate' power, it was German belligerency and Woodrow Wilson's desire to reform the world, not any 'Anglo-Saxon' urge to help Britain, that got the Americans involved for the first time in a European war. Moreover, before the Americans entered the fighting after three years as neutrals, the power relationship between Britain and the United States had changed dramatically as Britain plunged 'from the position of banker to America's expansion to total dependence on American financial support in 1916-1917.'²⁹

Britain was still a great power at the end of the war, of course: having just carved up the Ottoman Empire in the Middle-East, nearly one quarter of the world map was covered in red. While experiencing postwar economic distress, Britain was spared the levels of misery and destitution suffered by the ravaged belligerents on the Continent. Nevertheless, the American insistence on repayment of British war-debts created in Britain the same kind of hostility afforded in the 1920s in France to 'L'Oncle Shylock' and 'l'impérialisme américain'.³⁰ The financial wars - amplified by an American challenge to Britain's Naval supremacy - created an acute sense of global rivalry with the United States felt most keenly in the Admiralty, the Empire-related Civil Service and the Conservative party, which was the political party in power for most of the interwar years.³¹

British fears of being displaced abroad were amplified by the dread of being dominated at home by the capital, products and ideas imported from the American mass market booming in the prosperity of the United States in the 1920s. Expressions of British economic nationalism could be found on all levels of society in the 1920s, though it was the contraction of American business during the

Depression, and the rise of American protectionism, which gave the final push to the setting up of tariff walls around Britain and the Empire in 1932.³² The most fervent calls for protectionism were directed, however, against American mass culture, in particular the film industry, which from its centre in the Hollywood hills became during the interwar years the main provider of global mass entertainment. Commercial worries as to screen-time allowed to Hollywood in Britain and the Empire - 'the flag follows the film' - were given additional impetus by defenders of the nation's identity and moral health. Two largely unsuccessful attempts were made to stem the Hollywood tide by imposing quota restrictions on American films, and so prevent, explained a Labour MP in 1937, 'what I am sure will not be accomplished, or even attempted, in any other way - the annexation of this country by the United States.'³³

From the turn of the century, however, the calls for protectionist measures to halt the American commercial and cultural 'invasion' were combined with hopes, in the political sphere, that the Americans would help Britain to create a stable international environment. The failure of Wilson's idealistic plans and the 'irresponsible' retreat into political isolationism produced in Britain the deep cynicism displayed in Neville Chamberlain's remark (in private) that 'it is always safest and best to count on nothing from the Americans but words.'³⁴ Yet as the war clouds began to gather again in Europe, British doubts about the United States and fears of the price of American help were mingled with hopes that some kind of help could be expected in the long run.³⁵

This state of affairs continued even when the war finally broke out and the events of the First World War seemed to be repeating themselves, Britain was

fighting to save itself and the whole world from German evil while the United States remained on the sidelines. The sudden and unexpected collapse of France, however, brought even Chamberlain to acknowledge that 'our only hope, it seems to me, lies in Roosevelt & the U.S.A.'³⁶ Soliciting the help of the Americans became the main policy of the British Government: pragmatically, this was the only alternative to seeking 'peace' terms from Hitler; sentimentally, it drew on the idea of the Anglo-American 'special association' which had appealed to British foreign policy-makers in times of trouble since the Boer War, and was now popularized in the passionate rhetoric of Winston Churchill, the newly-appointed Prime Minister, who had spent some of his years in the political wilderness in the 1930s writing a four-volume History of the English-Speaking Peoples.³⁷

American help was indeed given, but there was a heavy price to pay. Cash and carry arrangements allowed the British to make purchases of war materials but depleted British gold and dollar reserves; fifty old American Destroyers much needed by Britain were supplied only in exchange for Caribbean bases; the Lend-Lease Bill removed 'the sign of the dollar' from American aid but British securities and investments in the United States had to be sold at a cut-price to secure the Bill's passage in Congress. All the British government could do was to grumble behind closed doors in resentment at the high-handed American demands: Churchill likened at one point the American attitude to that of a 'sheriff collecting the last assets of a helpless debtor.'³⁸ Indeed, the use of Lend-Lease - the 'most unsordid act in history' - as an American political leverage to extract British concessions on trade provides a striking example of the gap between the grand Churchillian

rhetoric for public consumption, and the conflicting interests and changing realities of power during World War Two.³⁹

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That the Anglo-American wartime alliance was Winston Churchill's creation is, as David Reynolds has observed, 'a statement about historiography as much as history.'⁴⁰ When the United States finally entered the war in December 1941, Churchill famously wrote in his history of The Second World War, he knew that 'once again in our long Island history we should emerge, however mauled or mutilated, safe and victorious.' Many 'silly' people thought that the Americans were 'soft', 'weak', 'remote, wealthy and talkative people' But Churchill, who had studied the American Civil War and had 'American blood' flowing in his own veins, knew that they were made of sterner stuff; and being 'saturated and satiated with emotion and sensation', the Prime Minister went to bed and 'slept the sleep of the saved and thankful'⁴¹

These forceful words, first published in 1950 at the height of the Cold War, have informed a popular perception of the Anglo-American World War Two alliance, principally designed to propagate the postwar Special Relationship. Yet the circumstances in which the Americans were bombed into the war at Pearl Harbor could have left completely different memories. Aneurin Bevan, one of the main protagonists of this study, told American readers in 1957 that 'American participation in the war was accepted by the British people 'thankfully, but not necessarily gratefully. It was felt that America did what she did because no

alternative course was left open to her.' A taxi-driver's retort to the expletives of an angry American officer whose fancy new car he had just grazed - 'Pearl Harbour to you' - was a remark Bevan heard at the time which 'conveyed more than could be done in many long dissertations'⁴²

Thus the events surrounding the American entry into the war on the side of Britain allowed two postwar interpretations: one stressing the fine qualities of the American people and the benefit of having American power on your side; the other questioning the conduct and motives behind American power.

On one hand there was the special relationship cultivated by Churchill and symbolized by his own much-publicized relationship with President Roosevelt. The Former Naval Person had corresponded with the American President regularly even before had become Prime minister; they sang hymns together on board H M S 'Prince of Wales' in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, and thrashed out the common war aims in the Atlantic Charter, even before the wartime alliance had formally been created.⁴³ No sooner had the Americans entered the war than Churchill was in Washington for a lengthy period, making a famous speech on Capitol Hill and supervising in person what, according to H J Nicholas, a historian of the Churchillian school, was the 'real merging of two national wills, two fighting forces and two economies.'⁴⁴ The economic rival of the peace years was now the 'arsenal of democracy', and the great 'English speaking peoples' had joined arms together at last to emancipate the world from a great evil

What Churchill called in 1943 'the natural Anglo-American special relationship' contributed no doubt to an alliance rooted in culture and history, certainly compared to the mistrusted and aloof participation of the Soviet Union in the

Grand Alliance ⁴⁵ That the Anglo-American alliance was also a tense and even acrimonious affair, however, began to emerge soon after the war with the publication of postwar accounts by the leading participants and was finally confirmed with the opening of official archives ⁴⁶ Complicating matters on the British side was the painful need to adapt to a new status of inferiority. In crucial debates over allied strategy, Churchill achieved the policy of 'Germany first' and delayed the Second Front - which reinforced the British reputation for 'craftiness' in some American circles - but the material constraints imposed by the Americans upon any strategy which they did not themselves support, such as in the southeast Asian theatre, made it clear, much to the anger of Churchill, that the American piper was calling the tune. ⁴⁷ American industry and manpower dominated and defined the capabilities of the common war effort and that the Americans usually had the final say, sometimes in a hostile and rude manner, deeply offended British pride and added fire to their own resentments and prejudices. ⁴⁸

Hugh Dalton had sensed by July 1942 'in certain circles, both at the Foreign Office and the Treasury, an anti-American prejudice'; this was 'very real', agreed Sir Arthur Salter: 'It was the jealousy of the old British governing class at "the passing of power"'. ⁴⁹ The famous wartime metaphor of Harold Macmillan, who advised the British to cast themselves in the role of 'Greeks' in the new American Empire, typified in its cheerful condescension towards the 'big' but 'adolescent' and 'vulgar' ally, an attitude which often turned into contempt among senior British officers and Whitehall policy-makers. ⁵⁰ These sentiments were especially pronounced in matters not directly related to the actual war effort 'What a pity it would be', lamented a British official at one of the wartime conferences on the

future of the colonies, 'to take the management of great affairs from men like [Lord] Hailey', Britain's leading colonial expert, and 'give them over to the boys with the thick-lensed glasses, long hair and longer words nasally intoned.'⁵¹

American anti-imperialism, in particular regarding India, was an old cause of British bitterness. At a lecture tour in the United States in 1933, Harold Nicolson was asked by a woman with a voice 'palpitating with up-lift', about the fate of the 'poor Indians'. 'Which Indians?', Nicolson replied, 'yours or ours?... Whereas we educated and multiplied our Indians you practically exterminated yours.'⁵²

Roosevelt's prodding had led Churchill - much to the anger of the Right-wing of his own Party - to commit Britain in the Atlantic Charter to the right of all peoples to national sovereignty and self-government.⁵³ Pressure from Roosevelt a year later to set a time-table for independence in India drew, however, from Churchill himself a threat of resignation.⁵⁴ As Churchill publicly declared in 1942, responding to American sermonizing, he had not become 'the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.'⁵⁵

Even more resented, however, were 'internationalist' civil aviation proposals and multilateral trade policies of the American Government.⁵⁶ Competition favoured the Americans, as it had the British in the nineteenth century. Churchill, at heart a free trader, was less moved on this issue but leading Ministers from his own Party, such as Leo Amery and Lord Beaverbrook, were deeply disturbed by the American attempt to break-up the system of Imperial Preference. Amery, who talked (in private) of the challenge of 'American Lebensraum', even seemed to prefer Hitler's 'New Economic Order' in Europe to the 'lunatic' free trade convictions of American Secretary of State Cordell Hull.⁵⁷ With Beaverbrook and

a considerable number of Tory Ministers and MPs, Amery continued to fight tooth and nail against Article VII of the Lend Lease agreement (1942)· they viewed it as nothing but a sinister American political weapon to force British trade concessions and enable the United States to inherit British markets.⁵⁸ The monetary policies agreed at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944, creating a postwar system of fixed-exchange rates supported by a dollar-dominated International Monetary Fund and Export-Import Bank, were hardly more palatable to the Imperial die-hards.⁵⁹ By the latter stages of the war, backbenchers of all parties never ceased to trouble the government whenever the Americans threatened to strip Britain of cherished assets, from air routes to works of art.⁶⁰

For most of the war, however, the British Government was extremely reluctant to express official discontent with the United States. It was one thing to scribble sharp and insulting comments about American policy and practice in Whitehall memoranda or in the diaries of senior British officers, another to let openly-expressed bitterness ruin Government efforts to keep the Americans firmly behind British war aims. Such was Britain's dependence on the United States since 1940 that offending the Americans seemed a luxury Britain could ill-afford, especially American public opinion. Recognizing the domestic pressures which influenced American foreign policy, the British had conducted an intensive propaganda effort to get the Americans into the war.⁶¹ The alarming prospect of a resurgence of isolationism or a loosening of the American commitment to the Allied war-effort in Europe never receded after Pearl Harbor and kept Whitehall on its toes until the end of the war.⁶² American sensibilities were carefully observed in the more 'responsible' press, and especially the BBC.⁶³ Public criticism of American policies

was made even by Churchill when necessary⁶⁴, but not hints of an acrimonious relationship between the two peoples. In an angry letter in 1943 to Sir Walter Layton, the chairman of the News Chronicle, Churchill described the publication in his newspaper of a Gallup poll showing that Britons and Americans held a low opinion of each other's war-effort as 'one of the worst things that has happened in the newspaper world since the war began.'⁶⁵ 'If the United States take a bad view of the British war effort, that will do little harm', Churchill told the Minister of Information Brendan Bracken; 'but great harm is done if the British rank the United States effort below that of China. Moreover it is rubbish.'⁶⁶

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The Churchillian concern about the British attitude towards the American war-effort was indicative of the flourish of official interest in popular British attitudes towards the United States and the American people as a whole. During the war, vigorous efforts were made to improve in Britain the image of the American allies by countering the ignorance and prejudice which had produced the 'silly people', mentioned above by Churchill, those who had thought the Americans were merely 'weak', 'remote, wealthy and talkative people '

Organized British efforts to promote knowledge and understanding of the United States in Britain were nothing new. The search at the turn of the twentieth century for political and strategic accommodation with the United States was manifested in the appearance of Anglo-American organizations - focusing on 'Anglo-Saxon' racial mottoes and linguistic unity - which sought to 'inspire

‘understanding’ on both sides of the Atlantic through personal contacts between ‘all-party’ social elites.⁶⁷ The most enduring of these organizations proved to be the upper-class Society of Pilgrims founded in 1902, whose patron was the King, which participated in the work of fostering good relations by ceremonials and dinners used as a convenient platform for public speeches and toasts.⁶⁸ Yet the most important Anglo-American organization in terms of (mostly) middle-class membership figures and work carried out, was the English-Speaking Union of the British Empire (later Commonwealth). Founded by the editor and journalist Sir Evelyn Wrench in 1918, the E-SU with its ‘sister’ society in the United States aimed to increase ‘the knowledge of one another possessed by the English-speaking peoples.’⁶⁹ It became in the interwar years a meeting-place for enthusiasts and a medium for dissemination in Britain of knowledge on American history and ways of life, mainly by student and teacher exchange schemes.⁷⁰

Only Britain’s predicament in 1940-1941, however, was to bring the full support of the State for the enthusiasm which always existed among the faithful to ‘Anglo-American understanding’.⁷¹ Most education efforts in Britain until then were private and unofficial: Government interest in bodies such as the E-SU was small and principally concerned with their value for the ‘projection’ of Britain abroad.⁷² Plans in Whitehall to educate British public opinion about the merits of close co-operation with the French allies were hastily shelved, however, after the collapse of France.⁷³ British attention shifted now entirely across the Atlantic and following the passage of Lend Lease early in 1941 - ‘the year of the British discovery of America’ - Whitehall joined forces with the Anglo-American

voluntary organizations to promote American studies in schools and universities where they hardly existed before.⁷⁴

The level of ignorance and prejudice which hitherto characterized the popular view of America and Americans was fully revealed in detailed surveys carried out by the Home Intelligence Division of the Ministry of Information (MOI), aided by outside bodies such as the pioneering social survey Mass-Observation (M-O).⁷⁵ As M-O analysts never tired of pointing out, the British assumed that Americans were not really foreigners but eccentric 'overseas cousins'. There had always been therefore

a very large volume of friendliness towards the Americans, but this is tempered with a recognition of certain defects of character. Just as people tend to criticise their relations more closely and vigorously than their friends, so do Englishmen take the liberty of criticising Americans more than other foreign nations, just because they expect a higher standard of them.'⁷⁶

Thus the basic British attitude towards the Americans - if one could try to describe a 'national' attitude at all - was not negative by any means, yet it consisted of a rich compilation of images of Americans and American life which the British people compared unfavourably on the whole with themselves. The Americans were friendly but also boastful and vulgar, they had fewer class distinctions but America was no longer seen as the 'land of promise' for the poor; they enjoyed higher living standards but were commercially-minded and materialistic, they were democratic but had a corrupt and cumbersome system of Government; they were 'free and easy' but suffered from much crime and allowed too much independence for

women and children. And, of course, there was the minority which disliked the American accent and found Americans lacking in cultural refinement.⁷⁷

Most of these images and 'defects of character' had long occupied the British mind, having been conveyed since the nineteenth century by British transatlantic travellers such as Charles Dickens.⁷⁸ From the first decades of the twentieth century, these images were vigorously reinforced by the 'Americanized' British popular press, whose coverage of American affairs dealt mainly with human-interest stories of sensation and crime⁷⁹ - and, of course, by Hollywood.⁸⁰

An MOI Home Intelligence special report in February 1942 concluded, however, that despite the outstanding ignorance, the American entry into the war occasioned a great thirst for knowledge about the United States and that 'the public feels, above all, in need of more information about the ordinary ways of life of ordinary American people.'⁸¹ The need to educate the British people about American *ordinariness* - indicating that the Americans were regarded as anything but 'ordinary' - was the basis of all the efforts to portray the Americans more favourably during the war and after. Over the Atlantic Ocean there were 'ordinary' Americans whose 'ordinary' lives were distorted by the mass media and Hollywood. Efforts were therefore made now to present this 'ordinary' America on the BBC⁸², in films⁸³, Brains Trust lectures⁸⁴, journals⁸⁵, and books⁸⁶ intended to present the Americans as 'ordinary people not gangsters, millionaires, reporters or Hollywood.'⁸⁷

Another wartime development was the official American attention to British public opinion. Until the outbreak of the war, there was little interest in Washington about the American image abroad, reflecting the lack of interest in

foreign affairs as a whole Government machinery for the dissemination of official propaganda abroad was terminated after a brief experience during the first world war; and the 'slow media' field of cultural relations was left to private philanthropic organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (which both, like the E-SU, carried out some small-scale education activities in Britain to promote knowledge of the United States).⁸⁸ The American entry into the war, however, had the same impact on the United States as it had in Britain. An American Office of War Information (OWI) was created in 1942 and started to operate in Britain information and cultural activities, that included travelling exhibitions and the setting-up of a reference library in the American Embassy.⁸⁹

How successful these efforts were was hard to measure. An MOI survey in October 1942 conducted among 'younger, more intelligent' people concluded that 'anti-American feeling was hard to find' but there was also 'a lack of positive admiration for either American achievements or American institutions.' Furthermore, 'while numerous Anglo-Soviet societies, groups, and study circles have sprung up, there has been no corresponding growth of "Americanophile" societies'⁹⁰ Gallup opinion polls indeed showed the Soviet Union to be a more popular and admired ally at 'the height of the Russomania' in 1942-1943.⁹¹ It was definitely much easier to admire from afar the heroic Red Army defending Moscow and Stalingrad, than American troops who swamped Britain, loitering around when not on (equally brave) flight missions or simply training and waiting for D-Day.

The American 'occupation' of Britain reached a peak of nearly two million GIs on the eve of D-day in April 1944, bringing about a unique wartime interface

between societies and cultures.⁹² It was certainly far from a story of overbearing British bitterness suggested by the famous complaint that the GIs were ‘over-fed, over-sexed and over-here.’ The GIs were met, in fact, with the same mixture of curiosity and fascination that had marked the reaction to American popular culture in the interwar years. When the first American troops arrived in February 1942, reported the Daily Mail, ‘the Britons “Hiya, Pal” was more authentic Hollywood than the Americans grinning “Howdy”’.⁹³ In ration-starved Britain, the wealth that the GIs lavishly displayed validated their Hollywood aura, while their openness, warmth, and success among women and children have since become legendary.

Attitudes, however, were not uniform. Direct contact with the GIs was thought on the whole to improve relations, but it could also give the British direct knowledge of the less attractive sides of American life such as the colour-bar of the American army.⁹⁴ Disparities in pay caused particular hostility between British and American troops, where the GIs had a much-resented lead in the off-duty battlefield of drink and women.⁹⁵ To this were added a list of moral grievances - profanity, drunkenness and promiscuity - not the best part of any army on leave.⁹⁶ The constant friction between the American troops and British troops and civilians only gave added impetus to the efforts, orchestrated by the American Division of the MOI, the American OWI and the army authorities, to improve relations by informing the GIs of British mores and educating the British people and troops about American (and GI) ways of life.⁹⁷

British official enthusiasm to educate the British public about the American way of life, however, was not to include American mass culture. In the BBC, for example, the Soviet ally might have been regarded as a potentially subversive

political force - occasioning pathetic debates on whether to play the 'Internationale' to Home audiences or not⁹⁸ - but the United States was a source of subversive forces too, though cultural rather than political. The BBC had been established in 1923 by Britain's political elite as a cultural antithesis to American commercial broadcasting practices, and in the 1930s American entertainment and language were kept to a grudging minimum by the BBC hierarchy⁹⁹

During the war, the amount of time devoted by the BBC to programmes of American affairs and entertainment was increased in an (unsuccessful) attempt to appeal to the American forces in Britain and in late 1943 had reached 12 hours per week on the Home and Forces Services combined.¹⁰⁰ Yet with the 'postwar broadcasting picture' in mind, however, the BBC's new Director-General, William Haley, maintained that 'recorded American serial broadcasts such as the Bob Hope, Jack Benny and other programmes' must not 'become a Frankenstein' - already creating listener enthusiasm for 'such programmes' which he thought had not previously existed - and that the increased wartime use of documentaries 'by or about America' should be curtailed.¹⁰¹ The BBC New York office commented that 'certain kinds of American shows will always be popular with British listeners' and from 'the Anglo-American viewpoint there is also great value in laughing at the same things'¹⁰² Haley, however, was supported by Basil Nicolls, the BBC veteran and Senior Controller. 'Americanisation is a real danger in the entertainment programmes' which needs to be resisted 'within reasonable limits', he opined 'I think in the long run we must draw a clear distinction between Americanisation on the one hand and the necessity for explaining America to this country on the other.'¹⁰³ The dilemma for those British working to present 'ordinary' Americans

in a better light, during the war years and after, could not have been made in clearer terms.

v

The common fighting experiences and institutionalized good-will of the Anglo-American alliance during World War Two would serve in postwar years as the foundation to what Churchill popularized as the 'Special Relationship. Britain's gruelling predicament, however, also accelerated the long process in which British decline was accompanied by the rise of the United States to political and cultural prominence. The war brutally displayed Britain's growing domination and displacement by the United States, resentment of which, this study will argue, was at the root of most manifestations of 'anti-Americanism' in postwar Britain

Missing, however, was the term itself. There was plenty of talk during the war of 'anti-American' attitudes but not much use of the term 'anti-Americanism' - an *ism* which perhaps points to something more deep-rooted or ideological. The first recorded mention of 'anti-Americanism' dates as early as 1844, made by an American, but a whole century elapsed before the term came into popular use in Britain in the early postwar years. It received no mention at all in the first edition of the Oxford English Dictionary and was hardly heard until the end of the second world war.¹⁰⁴

The rise of the term 'anti-Americanism' in Britain was connected no doubt to international linguistic influences: American publicists will be seen in particular to have done much to popularize this term. Indeed it has been suggested that the term

‘anti-Americanism’ thus indicates an ‘astounding’¹⁰⁵ novelty representing a phenomenon with no ‘parallel in the past’.¹⁰⁶ A short semantic tour in the Oxford English Dictionary, however, shows that ‘anti-Gallican’ was a current term in the eighteenth century and during the Napoleonic wars ‘anti-Gallicanism’ was declared an English ‘habitual interest.’¹⁰⁷ ‘For Great Britain anti-Germanism is not a matter of ill temper nor even of dogma’, wrote a British newspaper in 1910 at another period of national alarm at an outside threat, ‘but a view of world affairs which has grown up on historic and religious grounds.’¹⁰⁸

None of these terms, however, have had the degree or durability of use gained by ‘anti-Americanism’ since 1945. One obvious way to explain this sudden and outstanding linguistic development is to focus on the sharp contrast between British weakness, and American power, during the war and in its aftermath. ‘Hostile sentiments, however rationalised, may be interpreted as a protection against hurt’, I.C. Jarvie observes, and ‘the collective sentiments we call anti-Americanism are a way to protect and build up a bruised and weakened national ego.’¹⁰⁹

No doubt this is true. Yet another striking fact is that it is practically impossible in postwar Britain to find individuals or organizations who proclaim to be ‘anti-American’ or profess to believe in some creed named ‘anti-Americanism’. And this indeed was a novelty. Even those most hostile to American political or cultural influence did not create any body *openly* xenophobic in title or name like the Laudable Association of Anti-Gallicans, which was founded in 1745 during an invasion crisis by a group of middle-class London tradesmen dedicated to fighting French arms and manners.¹¹⁰ Such candid hostility and prejudice, after the horrors

of Nazism, would no longer be acceptable. Blunt manifestations of national chauvinism had become discredited and with them the chance of seeing in operation in Britain an 'Anti-American Association'.

So who did use the term? An elementary but important starting point for understanding 'anti-Americanism', Marcus Cunliffe has noted, is that 'like anti-Semitism [it is] a highly pejorative label. It is an accusation levelled at other people, not an attribute people claim for themselves.'¹¹¹ It will therefore be first and foremost important in this study to see what was labelled as 'anti-Americanism' or who was called 'anti-American', and the reasons why. This will be, in this sense, a study of British postwar discourse: of how attitudes on a wide variety of issues were related to a vague term like 'anti-Americanism'. For this reason, it will keep this often loosely-applied term in quotation marks, mostly in the form of quotes from the mouths or pens of contemporaries.

Some limitations must be placed, however, on the principal terms of enquiry and the nature of the exercise, which are, in fact, conditioned by the narrative itself. The period of research are the years between 1945 and 1956: a decade that saw the political and cultural power of the United States burst with greater vigour than ever on the global and the British scene. The transfer of hegemony across the Atlantic and the humiliating spectre of dependence, domination and displacement could be barely concealed by the Cold War and the Atlantic alliance. This was also the decade in which 'anti-Americanism', for the first time, gained wide currency as a term used to describe British hostility towards the United States. The term 'anti-Americanism', as shall be seen, was mainly used in these years to denote the attitudes of the 'British Left': another broad term used here to imply the adherence

to the heterogeneous mixture of radical traditions and Socialist beliefs which opposed the existing power structures of the capitalist nation-state.

Such definition indicates a division of attitudes in the political spectrum which was not necessarily a real one. Certainly, resentment at Britain's domination and displacement by the United States ran deep also on the 'British Right' and informed the hostility that could be found in the Conservative Party from the second world war to the Suez crisis and beyond. The hostility of 'the Left', however, seems a more complicated phenomenon. On one level, it can be simply explained as the ideological consequence of a rational analysis of capitalism, and the projection of the socialist struggle against 'vested interests' across the Atlantic: a phenomenon which the Observer viewed in 1951 as 'the facile transference of stale anti-Tory feelings into fresh anti-American ones.'¹¹² However, on another level, 'anti-Americanism' can be seen as an expression of the 'irrational' forces of tradition and history which conditioned the attitudes towards the United States of the European 'Right' before the war: those which in judging the outside world derive their standards from what they consider to be the needs and superior achievements of their own nation.¹¹³ And these were the very same, and supposedly-discredited manifestations of British nationalism which the Left denounced with such venom when expressed on the other side of the political spectrum

This study chooses therefore to focus on British political life, and especially though not exclusively on the British Left, out of methodological necessity and intellectual choice. It will consider attitudes towards the United States - political and cultural - as articulated in Parliament, the Press, and other forms of national

political expression. In this sense it is essentially a qualitative study concerned primarily with politicians of national standing and opinion-formers, though quantitative methods such as polls, surveys and voting results will be used as an indicator, albeit always a limited one, to the force and direction of opinion in less articulate segments of British society. Private and unpublished sources will be employed to explore possible gaps between opinion for public or private consumption. Finally, extensive use will be made of official records on both sides of the Atlantic in order to inquire into the extent to which Governments showed interest in the manifestations of 'anti-Americanism', in particular of the Left, in the period under discussion.

Among the various political parties around which the Left organized itself, Communist parties have naturally occupied a primary place in the studies of 'anti-Americanism' in Western Europe during a first postwar decade dominated by the Cold War.¹¹⁴ But in Britain the case should be different. The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), founded in 1920, was a marginal force in British political life.¹¹⁵ Unlike the French and Italian Communist Parties, whose members in the late 1940s were numbered at hundreds of thousands and who made a real bid for power, the CPGB fortunes in postwar years were constantly diminishing.¹¹⁶ The highest membership figure it ever commanded from its King Street headquarters was 56,000 members in 1942, and even from this 'peak', brought about by the wave of wartime sympathy for the Soviet Union, there was a steady decline which continued throughout the period under discussion.¹¹⁷ In the 1945 general elections, its most successful ever, the CPGB won one seat in Parliament for Phil Piratin and also retained the seat of the Scottish veteran William Gallacher. Both, however,

lost their seats in the 1950 elections and no Communist MP has ever been elected since. The Communists did exercise considerable influence in the trade unions, but the CPGB had become a political pariah because of the Cold War, labouring more than ever under the perception created among the public at large throughout its existence that 'its primary function', as one historian of the Party has put it, 'was to act as an agent of the Soviet government' ¹¹⁸ Communist vitriol directed at the United States was not usually referred to as 'anti-Americanism' but as 'anti-American propaganda', suggesting something less indigenous or sincere.

The principal target of this study is therefore the British Labour Party: which was formed in 1900 by a combination of trade unions and socialist groups to represent the interests of 'labour members' in Parliament. ¹¹⁹ It remained a 'contentious alliance', in which several big trade unions were given institutional predominance in the Party's ruling bodies - the National Executive (NEC) and the annual Party Conference - for most of the century. ¹²⁰ This has also meant that Socialism - in its purest sense meaning the transformation of property relations in society - had to be grafted onto the trade unions' 'labourist' ideological base, principally concerned with the 'gradual' improvement of working-class standards of living. The degree and the means by which socialists were to transform society were no more coherent, imbibing a mixture of traditions and beliefs: Christian social ethics, religious dissent, radical liberalism, Marxist doctrine, Fabian managerialism. ¹²¹ The Labour Party adopted in 1918 a 'socialist' constitution advocating the 'common ownership of the means of production'; however even during the turbulent interwar years, ridden with industrial strife in the 1920s and

the fight against Fascism in the 1930s, the Party remained basically committed to 'parliamentary socialism' and democratic methods of achieving power.

Twice the long parliamentary road resulted in short-lived minority Governments (1924, 1929-1931) which ended in bitter disappointment. Yet after a long and useful apprenticeship in Churchill's wartime coalition, the Labour Party led by Clement Attlee dramatically swept into power in the 1945 elections. By absorbing the remnants and crusading energies of parties to its Left such as the Independent Labour Party¹²² and Common Wealth¹²³, which flourished before and during World War Two respectively, the Labour Party established itself as the only serious organized force on the Left in the first postwar decade.¹²⁴

'We are the masters now', a Labour Minister was said to have declared when the 1945 Parliament began its life with the Labour Party's 393 MPs ensuring an astounding working majority.¹²⁵ However, very soon the real masters seemed to be 'the Americans' on whom Britain was dependent for her postwar reconstruction and security; or so at least believed the Labour Party's vocal Left-wing which in the next few years became the main opposition to an emerging Anglo-American Cold War alliance, and therefore the principal target for charges of 'anti-Americanism'. In the 1945 Parliament, the Labour Left was not much more than a 'militant tendency' acting as a self-appointed 'conscience' to a leadership it perceived to be deserting the old socialist principles, in particular by developing close relations with the United States.¹²⁶ By the early 1950s, however, Bevanism had galvanized the Labour Left, not least around the need to resist being dragged too far behind American wheels.¹²⁷ And as the Labour Party was now out of office, and the leadership too felt more free to openly criticize American policies, the

Party as a whole seemed consumed by 'anti-Americanism' - or so at least, liked to claim critics.

This study will examine the charge which was persistently placed at the door of the British Left. It will claim that the distaste with which the Labour Left viewed the Anglo-American Cold War alliance was confused too readily with hostility towards Americans - as a people or a nation - and it will show how important it was for the speakers of the Left to point this out. Furthermore, by following the development of attitudes towards the United States in the Labour Party, it aims to show that hostile responses towards the United States on the British Left imbibed the same national resentments which could be found in other quarters of British political life. The Left had its own set of ideological and emotional prejudices which gave a distinct colour, and perhaps added impetus, to its resentments. But underpinning all the hostile sentiments was the resentment of Britain's postwar domination and displacement by the United States, which among the Tories was concealed only by the onset of the Cold War, until it erupted with force during the Suez crisis.

Another important goal of this study is to show the great concern with which 'anti-Americanism' was considered during this time. This will serve two purposes: first, to emphasize that Britain was in no way consumed by hostility towards the United States; but second, to indicate how the manifestations of hostility which did exist were significant enough to cause considerable public worry. This sentiment should not be termed, as it often was and is, 'pro-Americanism', this term was not accepted even by careful contemporaries.¹²⁸ The reasons for 'liking' certain aspects of the United States could be every bit as diverse as the reasons for 'disliking'

them the desire for a strategic association with the United States, for example, was often reiterated most passionately by those who deplored American business activity - or despised American culture.

Anti-anti-Americanism seems a much better term to describe what was a powerful emotion in British public life. During World War Two, as has been seen, this was manifested in anti-anti-American action - to counter the popular ignorance and prejudice with regards to the United States - vigorously pursued by official and unofficial bodies. As one of the many 'hand-across-the-sea' books published during the war explained,

We have reason to believe that even at the present time all too many Englishmen are disposed to think about America as Hitler wishes them to think. I do not mean that they are actively anti-American, but at least they are in a frame of mind to be worked upon by the Nazi agents who are still among us.... [A] foolish man is just as likely to vote against measures of co-operation with America when the war is over because he found a piece of chewing gum on the seat in a bus which must have been left by an American, as for any other more serious political, economic reason.'¹²⁹

Such anti-anti-American reasoning did not disappear after the defeat of Germany. A new threat for British security emerged in the shape of the Cold War: Hitler was replaced by Stalin and the Nazi agents by those of the British Communist Party. Britain was dependent on the United States to such a degree, that any sign of public hostility towards the United States - even on the most trivial matters - came to be regarded by an Atlanticist political consensus as a threat to Britain herself. This study will therefore consider the anti-anti-American plans made by Whitehall,

Washington, and the Atlanticist faithful, of which there were plenty in the Labour Party too, to counter 'anti-Americanism' by promoting in Britain a more positive image of the United States as a people - and as Cold War allies.

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- 63 Government 'guidance' on 'matters prejudicial to good relations' with allies or neutrals, were offered to the BBC and the press until the end of the war. See P.M.H. Bell, John Bull and the Bear: British Public Opinion, Foreign Policy and the Soviet Union, 1941-1945 (London: Edward Arnold, 1991), p. 14. George Orwell, who had worked for the BBC earlier in the war, noted in December 1943 the 'careful censorship' of 'anything the Americans might object to', See Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (eds) George Orwell. Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters (CEJL), Vol 3 (London: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 77.
- 64 See 'Appendix. Public Opinion And the Darlan Deal, November-December 1942' in Bell, John Bull, pp. 190-202
- 65 PM to W. Layton, 17/7 1943 Public Record Office (hence PRO), Kew, London, PREM4/66/2. See the Gallup opinion poll in the News Chronicle, 'Who's Winning the War Anyway?', 17/3/1943, p. 2.
- 66 PM to Minister of Information, 22/7 1943. PRO, PREM4/66/2.

67. Already in 1871 an Anglo-American Association was formed to counter a 'lamentable ignorance of American history, which exists in England among otherwise well-instructed politicians...' Its members included the philosopher Herbert Spencer and the journalist and editor John Morely. The writer Sir Walter Besant formed the Atlantic Union in 1897, a year which saw the formation (but quick disappearance) of two other societies for 'diffusing accurate information.' See Heindel, The American Impact, p. 38-9.
- 68 By 1957, when a visit by Vice-President Richard Nixon was being planned by the Foreign Office, Harold Macmillan hoped that 'it might be possible to get away from the necessity of having a Pilgrim's dinner on every occasion like this' See Prime Minister's personal minute, 6/10/1957. PRO, FO371/126689, AU1054/17. Nixon eventually arrived a year later - and a Pilgrim's dinner of course took place.
69. The first British and American co-presidents were Arthur Balfour and William Taft. See B.M. Gardner (ed.), The Anglo-American Year Book (London: The International Development Company, 1921), pp. 42-45.
70. Heindel, The American Impact, p. 276.
71. The zeal among the faithful was manifested in the creation in 1941 of a new organization to promote knowledge and understanding - the American and British-Commonwealth Association - which after the war merged with the E-SU. See The Anglo-American Yearbook, 1947, p. 42.
- 72 Philip M. Taylor, The Projection of Britain: British Overseas Publicity and Propaganda, 1919-1939 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chapter 4.
73. Reynolds, '1940: fulcrum', p. 330.
- 74 David Reynolds, 'Whitehall, Washington and the Promotion of American Studies in Britain During World War Two', Journal of American Studies, Vol. 16 (August 1982), pp. 172-173.
75. For a succinct discussion of the monitoring of public opinion by the Government during the war, see P.M.H. Bell, John Bull, chapter 1. For background on the MOI, see Ian McLaine, Ministry of Morale: Home Front

- Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979).
- 76 M-O File Report (hence FR) 1095, 16/2/1942. Mass-Observation Archive, University of Sussex Library, Brighton.
77. Ibid. MOI Home Intelligence Special Report No. 8, 23/2/1942. PRO, INF1/293.
- 78 Charles Dickens' American Notes For General Circulation (London: Penguin Books, 1985), was first published in 1842. On British travel literature after Dickens, see Richard Rapson, Britons View America: Travel Commentary, 1860-1935 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1971).
79. A survey in the late 1930s found that even in 'more sober morning papers, 30 to 40 percent went to cover sensation and crime; but as one British editor told the American surveyor, 'you make your crime more spectacular - and we lay the stress as do your own newspapers.' See Heindel, The American Impact, pp. 17-18.
80. Concern about the image of the United States was caused not only by the cheaper Hollywood products but also the highly-acclaimed social criticism films of Frank Capra and John Ford such as 'Mr Smith Goes to Washington' and 'Grapes of Wrath'. The American Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy, it was rumoured in the film industry, tried to stop them from being shown in Britain. See Reynolds News, 'Tom Driberg's Column', 10/11/1946, p. 4.
- 81 MOI Home Intelligence Special Report No. 8, 23/2/1942. PRO, INF1/293
- 82 Sian Nicholas, "'Partners Now': Problems in the Portrayal by the BBC of the Soviet Union and the United States of America, 1939-45', Diplomacy & Statecraft Vol. 3, No 2 (July 1992), pp. 243-271.
- 83 K R M. Short, 'Cinematic Support for the Anglo-American Detente, 1939-43', in Philip M. Taylor (ed), Britain and the Cinema in the Second World War (London Macmillan, 1988), pp. 121-143, Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, Britain Can Take It: The British Cinema in the Second World War (Oxford. Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp 277-296.
- 84 Anglo-American Brains Trust, Here's Your Answer (London: Hutchinson, 1945).

- 85 Despite the wartime ban on starting new publications, due to strict paper-rationing, the MOI allowed in 1943 to launch Transatlantic, a monthly published by Penguin Books and edited by the editor of The Economist Geoffrey Crowther, whose purpose was to present American affairs to British readers. The paper-ration was conditional and in 1946, under a new owner and editor, it had to reduce its format before finally disappearing a few years later.
- 86 D.W Brogan, U S.A. An Outline of the Country, Its People and Institutions (London: Oxford University Press, 1941); Phyllis E. Bentley, Here is America, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1941) Alicia Street, U.S.A. At Work and Play: Depicting the Outlook and Life of the American People (London. Cassell, 1942); John Langdon-Davies, America Close-Up: Portrait of an Ally (London: John Murray, 1943); D.W. Brogan, The American Problem (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1944).
87. Times Literary Supplement, 17/10/1942, p. 512.
88. Only in 1938, in response to Nazi activity in Latin America, was a Division in the State Department created to promote and co-ordinate cultural and educational affairs. Frank A. Ninkovich, The Diplomacy Of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). pp 28-34.
89. Reynolds, 'Whitehall, Washington', pp. 178-179.
90. The 'younger people' were also 'extremely suspicious' of attempts to gloss over American 'internal problems.' See MOI Home Intelligence Special Report No 32, 16/10/1942, PRO, INF1/293.
- 91 Bell, John Bull, pp. 88-96; Thorne, Allies, p 145.
92. David Reynolds, Rich Relations: The American Occupation of Britain, 1942-1945 (London: HarperCollins, 1995), Norman Longmate, The G I 's The Americans in Britain 1942-1945 (London: Hutchinson, 1975).
- 93 Daily Mail, 'The Yanks Arrive in Ulster', 27/1/1942
94. MOI, 'Report on the change in the state of British Public Opinion on the U.S.A during 1942 and 1943', 17 12/1944. PRO, INF1/292. See also Graham Smith, When Jim Crow met John Bull: Black American Soldiers in World War II Britain (London: I B. Tauris, 1987)

- 95 Reynolds, Rich Relations, pp. 151-154.
96. 'One begins to feel no need to bother about anti-Semitism', wrote the Left-wing novelist Naomi Mitchison in her diary, 'the Americans have completely taken the place of the Jews - stories about rape, etc....' See Dorothy Sheridan (ed.), Among You Taking Notes: The Wartime Diary of Neomi Mitchison (London: Victor Gollancz, 1985), p. 260.
- 97 Reynolds, Rich Relations, chapters 10-12; David Reynolds, 'G I. and Tommy in Wartime Britain: The Army "Inter-Attachment" Scheme of 1943-1944', Journal of Strategic Studies, Vol. 7, No. 4 (December 1984), pp 406-22.
98. Bell, John Bull, pp. 38-39; McLaine, Ministry of Morale, p. 199
99. Valeria Camporesi, "'We Talk a Different Language": The Impact of US Broadcasting in Britain, 1922-1927', Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1990), pp 257-274; Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff, A Social History of British Broadcasting: Volume One 1922-1939, Serving the Nation (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), pp 292-299.
100. Reynolds, Rich Relations, pp. 166-168; Report on 'Broadcasts on U.S.A.: Home and Forces Programmes', BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham Park, Reading, E2/19/2
101. W. Haley to L. Wellington, 16/8/1944. BBC Written Archives Centre, E1/109.
102. BBC New York Office, 11 9 1944. BBC Written Archives Centre, R34 575.
103. Memorandum by B.E. Nicolls, 4/10/1944. BBC Written Archives Centre, R34/575. For the discussions on postwar broadcasting in general, see Asa Briggs, The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Vol IV, Sound and Vision, 1945-1955 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), chapters 1-2.
104. The term 'anti-Americanism' was found in print in this research only three times before 1945. The earliest record of the term 'anti-American', however, dates from 1773, even before the birth of the American Republic. See The Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 519.
105. Marie-France Toinet, who notes the American impatience with foreign criticism noticed already by Tocqueville, suggests that there might be 'something specifically American' about it as 'suggested by McCarthyism and

- the struggle against “un-Americaness” which is ‘peculiar to the United States’. See Toinet, ‘Does Anti-Americanism Exist?’, in Lacorne et al. (ed), *The Rise and Fall*, pp. 220-221.
- 106 Henry Fairlie, ‘Anti-Americanism at Home and Abroad’, *Commentary*, Vol 60 (1975), p. 38.
107. *The OED, Second Edition, Second edition, Vol 1*, p. 525. Before the political and cultural fears of France, there was the commercial and ideological threat of seventeenth century Dutch Republicanism to worry about. See Steven C.A. Pincus, ‘From Butterboxes to Wooden Shoes: The Shifting English Popular Sentiment From Anti-Dutch to Anti-French in the 1670s’, *Historical Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (1995), pp. 333-364.
108. *Daily Chronicle*, 9/4/1910. Quoted in the *OED, Second Edition, Vol. 1*, p. 519.
109. I C. Jarvie, ‘Fanning the Flames’, p. 118.
110. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 1994), pp. 88-90.
111. Cunliffe, ‘The Anatomy’, p. 25.
112. *The Observer*, 29/4/51, p. 2.
113. Klaus Schwabe, ‘Anti-Americanism and the German Right, 1917-1933’, *Jahrbuch Fur Amerikastudien*, Vol. 21 (1976), p. 91.
114. Kuisel, *Seducing The French*, Chapter 3; Giorgio Vecchio, ‘Movimenti Pacifisti Ed Antiamericanismo In Italia (1948-1953)’, Working Paper No 86/249, *European University Institute, Florence* (1986).
115. The history of the CPGB during the Cold War awaits proper treatment using the archives in Moscow Most existing studies tend to be partisan in nature and deal solely with published sources. Henry Pelling, *The British Communist Party A Historical Profile* (London: Adams and Charles Black, 1975), is a critical view of the Party written originally in the 1950s Willie Thompson, *The Good Old Cause: British Communism, 1920-1991* (London: Pluto, 1992) is a recent and useful addition by an ex-Party member. The most rewarding reading, however, is Kevin Morgan, *Harry Pollitt* (Manchester: Manchester University

Press, 1993), a brilliant biography of the CPGB's long-serving General Secretary.

116 Walter Kendall, The Labour Movement in Europe (London: Allen Lane, 1975), pp. 50-65, pp. 153-158; pp. 385-88.

117 For membership figures see Thompson, The Good Old Cause, p. 218

118. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

119. The literature on the Labour Party is the most extensive available on any British political party. Henry Pelling's The Origins of the Labour Party: Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), is a lively account of the early years.

120. Lewis Minkin, The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991); Martin Harrison, Trade Unions and the Labour Party Since 1945 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1960)

121. Geoffrey Foote, The Labour Party's Political Thought: A History (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

122. The ILP's leader in its eventful interwar years, James Maxton, died in 1946. The two remaining ILP MPs, Campbell Stephen and John McGovern, joined the Labour Party in the following year as did Fenner Brockway, the (resigning) editor of the ILP's weekly New Leader (which changed name to Socialist Leader).

123. The Common Wealth Party appeared during the war because the by-election truce made it impossible for Labour and Liberals to challenge Tory seats. Its founder Richard Acland joined the Labour Party and became an MP in 1947, as did earlier the other Common Wealth MPs such as R. W. Mackay and E. R. Millington. See Angus Calder, The People's War: Britain 1939-1945 (London, Pimlico, 1992), pp. 547-550, Paul Addison, The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War, rev. ed. (London, Pimlico, 1994), pp. 159-160.

124. The diversion of radical energies into extra-parliamentary pressure groups such as the Union of Democratic Control, which had flourished in the early decades of the Century, had greatly diminished until the emergence of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in the late 1950s. See Richard Taylor, Against

The Bomb: The British Peace Movement 1958-1965 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

- 125 Sir Hartley Shawcross, the Labour Attorney General, said in Parliament in April 1946 that 'we are the masters of the moment' but in an Evening Standard article twelve days later he was misquoted and the more sinister sounding misquotation, Shawcross wrote in his memoirs, had 'stuck' ever since. See Hartley Shawcross, Life Sentence: The Memoirs of Lord Shawcross (London: Constable, 1995), pp. 141-142. See also H C Debates, Vol. 421, col. 1213 (2/4/1946).
126. Jonathan Schneer, Labour's Conscience: The Labour Left, 1945-51 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), p. 10.
127. Mark Jenkins, Bevanism: Labour's High Tide (London: Spokesman, 1979).
- 128 Leon D. Epstein, Britain - Uneasy Ally (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 6.
129. Langdon-Davies, America Close Up, pp. 127-8; p. 148.

Part A: “The Strange New Sin of Anti-Americanism”



Chapter Two: “The America Complex”

When the first Labour Government with an overall majority came into office in 1945, Germany had just been defeated, the surrender of Japan was only a question of time, and under the aegis of British socialism, a new and better postwar world was ready to be born. With the end of the war however, came the end of wartime allied harmony between Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union. By the time the Labour Party's term in office had come to an end in 1951, the world had been firmly divided between two opposing blocs led by the United States and the Soviet Union. As Britain's position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and the United States became the central issue in British politics in these years, the attitudes in the ruling Labour party towards the two postwar giants have been treated in detail by political scientists and historians.¹ Particular attention has been paid to the profound shift in attitudes and images caused by the Cold War; the hardening of opinion towards the Soviet Union precipitated a gradual acceptance of an Anglo-American alliance regarded as a 'momentous transformation in the outlook of the Labour party'.² Yet dramatic as this shift of opinions was - and there is certainly reason to doubt this shift regarding attitudes towards the United States - by 1951 a large section on the Left-wing of the Labour party had become principally associated in British politics with the phenomenon of 'anti-Americanism'. How and why this came about is the subject of the next three chapters

One of the most commented upon features of the 'anti-Americanism' of the British Left in the postwar years was its novelty 'The character of anti-Americanism' in Britain 'has undergone a dramatic change during the last ten years', wrote Cuthbert Alport, the former director of the Conservative Political Centre and future Tory Minister, in January 1952 'For the best part of two centuries the firmest friends of the United States were to be found among the radical bourgeoisie and the industrial workers. Its chief critics were those who espoused Conservatism in both politics and culture. Today the position is reversed'³

While one could argue about dates and definitions, there was indeed no doubt that the British Left's dominant image of the United States had been radically transformed between 1845 and 1945. In the mid-nineteenth century, the United States was regarded by the British Left as a 'land of promise' for working class emigrants and the chief model of democracy for middle-class radicals.⁴ The Chartists praised the higher standards of living enjoyed by American workers while Cobden and Bright, dubbed by political opponents as the 'Members for the United States', eulogized the Great Republic blessed by 'a free church, a free school, free land, a free vote, and a free career for the child of the humblest born in the land.'⁵

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the idealised image of 'America' as the land of freedom and equality for all began to fade. The gradual progress of democracy in Britain, the decline of radical liberalism and the rise of Labour politics permeated with the doctrine of Marxism, shifted the attention of the British

(and European) Left to the harsh nature of American labour relations and the threat posed by American trusts to organized labour in the United States and around the world ⁶ Negative aspects of American life - racism, violence, political intolerance - previously highlighted mainly by Tory aristocrats in order to attack American democracy, were all explained now as the outcome of a capitalist system of production based on mass exploitation and ruthless competition. Heavily influenced by American Marxist literature, British socialists began to perceive the United States in terms of Big Business which in Britain was still Big, but in America, like everything else, was growing even Bigger. The only feature in the American polity that puzzled socialist thought, and would continue to do so for years to come, was the absence in the United States of a vigorous working-class movement or Labour Party.

That in the British Left's mental geography 'America' had become the embodiment on earth of the evils of modern industrial capitalism was made patently clear in the interwar years. What could appeal to British socialists in the United States of the 1920s, where an unprecedented economic boom was accompanied by political and racial intolerance? Furthermore, the Bolshevik revolution had created in the Soviet Union a new territorial symbol for the admiration of socialists, who gazed now in search of salvation to the East, as much as with fear to the West ⁷ George Bernard Shaw, for example, returned from his celebrated tour of Russia in 1931 equating Communism with Fabian socialism ⁸ The Americans, on the other hand, were the very stuff of Shavian wit. 'I am held to be a master of irony', the seventy-seven year old playwright told an American audience two years later

during his first ever visit to the United States, 'but not even I would have had the idea of erecting a statue of Liberty in New York.'⁹

Any feelings, however, of *schadenfreude*, when the Depression which ended the Golden Decade indicated the arrival of the long-awaited crisis of capitalism¹⁰, were cut short by the spread of further unemployment and human misery to Europe. In Britain, it led directly to the collapse of the Labour Government in 1931, which put the Tories in power for the remainder of the 'hungry' decade. The (misperceived) 'role' of American bankers in the affair was never to be forgiven or forgotten in postwar years.¹¹ Nor did British socialists forget the lessons they believed they had learnt from the world-wide effects of a possible crisis of American capitalism. Anticipation of another American depression with disastrous effects on Britain was a nightmare which reverberated in Labour Party circles well into the 1950s, though in between there was Roosevelt and the New Deal which gave the Left plenty to argue about as to the nature of American capitalism and how much, if at all, it had changed. Socialists in the 1930s were, of course, dismissive of Roosevelt's attempt, in the words of the Oxford economist G.D.H. Cole, 'to superimpose a planned economy upon a system of private enterprise deeply impregnated with gangster elements.'¹² Some regarded the New Deal as an American form of Fascism, others as the sort of mild social reform carried out by the Liberal Government of Asquith before World War One.¹³ In any case, the leader of the Labour Left in the 1930s, Sir Stafford Cripps, was convinced that 'right-wing elements' in the Party and trade unions were wrong to search for inspiration in Roosevelt's great, but limited, experiment¹⁴

In the sphere of foreign policy, Henry Pelling has noted, the Left overcame the socialist distaste for expanding 'capitalist' powers and displayed a 'pragmatic' approach to involve the United States in the struggle against Fascist totalitarianism.¹⁵ Beyond pragmatism, however, there was also much in the American approach to foreign affairs which always appealed to the temper of the British Left: the view of global affairs as a struggle between good and evil forces and the inclination to embark on righteous crusades and demand moral gestures.¹⁶ Wilson's thwarted idealism captivated hearts during the First World War and during the Second, American leaders were responsible for the favourite wartime slogans of the Left: Roosevelt's famous 'Four Freedoms', Henry Wallace's 'Century of the Common Man' and Wendell Wilkie's 'One World'. The American President, in particular, became in these years a hero of the British Left.¹⁷ But Roosevelt did not outlive the war, while American capitalism did. And American interventionism always had that darker 'capitalist' side which repelled the British Left: that of the 'American Century' declared in early 1941 by the Presbyterian media mogul Henry Luce, the Republican Party's propagator of the Providential benefits of American 'free enterprise'.¹⁸

Much of the interpretation of these American events and moods for British socialists in these years was the work of Harold Laski, a political scientist at the London School of Economics. Laski's relationship with America and Americans began at Harvard in 1916, where he taught for four years. It continued to the end of his life in almost annual returns to lecture and visit former pupils and prominent friends, among whom he could proudly count President Roosevelt himself.¹⁹ From the 1930s - 'the age of Laski' - he was not only an intellectual force but also a

leading member of Labour Party's National Executive (NEC) for more than a decade. His outspokenness during the 1945 election campaign and after, while serving as Party Chairman, confirmed his position as the bogey-man of Right-wing politicians and press on both sides of the Atlantic - he was known as 'Lenin of the British Reds' in the United States.²⁰ With the Party leadership Laski carried little if any weight but his Marxist analysis of American capitalism was still very influential in Labour circles, especially among middle-class socialists, radicalized in the interwar years, who packed the local parties in the constituencies (CLPs) and the Labour backbenches in the 1945 House of Commons.²¹

Though often, like Laski, they were simply dismissed by opponents in the Labour Movement and outside as 'intellectuals' - always a vague term treated with suspicion in the Anglo-American world²² - many of the new Labour MPs were writers and speakers who capably articulated their opinions, and sometimes those of the Labour movement as a whole. Though vocal also in Parliament and the national press, three socialist weeklies were their main avenue of expression and ideological territory. Tribune, founded in 1937 'to advocate Socialism and demand active resistance to Fascism at home and abroad' soon became 'the established house journal of the Labour Left.'²³ Troubled from the very start by financial problems, Tribune in its early years was identified closely with Cripps, who kept it going with his own money. During the war, it was edited by the young darling of the Left, Aneurin Bevan, and after his appointment as Minister of Health in 1945 by a board of editors which included his wife Jennie Lee and his loyal henchman Michael Foot. Tribune was very influential among the zealous activists in the constituencies, although its circulation was only 20,000 copies per issue. This was

roughly the same circulation figure as that of Forward, an independent weekly of Socialists and Scottish Nationalists launched in Glasgow in 1906, which did not have the same national impact of Tribune, but included in the 1940s a regular feature by Laski.²⁴ From 1933 Forward was edited by the son-in-law of Keir Hardie, Emrys Hughes, a pacifist who remained a regular contributor after ceasing to be editor in 1946, following his election to Parliament.²⁵

And there was the New Statesman and Nation. Founded in 1913 by the eminent Fabians Sidney and Beatrice Webb, the NS&N was an intellectual weekly with a rapidly growing audience after Laski's friend Kingsley Martin became editor in 1930. Like Laski, Martin had spent a long spell in the United States in the early 1920s which left him with friends and impressions contributing to a life-long fascination with American affairs, well reflected in the NS&N.²⁶ By 1947 Martin had turned the NS&N into the most successful intellectual weekly in Britain, selling more than 84,000 copies a week and read, if only because of its renowned literary section, by conservative civil servants and communists alike.²⁷ Kingsley Martin and his NS&N retained an arms-length association with the Labour Party, but the socialist weekly too had very close contacts with the Labour Left in Parliament through a group of young writers, most notable of them was the assistant editor, Richard Crossman, one of the most formidable intellectual minds of postwar British politics and a leading Left-wing spokesman on foreign affairs in the 1945 Parliament

Some time after Laski's death in 1950, Crossman, who had earlier sought to analyse the "Russia Complex" underlying the enduring attachment of the Left to the Soviet Union²⁸, described the discomfort in the ranks of the Labour party with

the United States as an “America Complex” which he attributed to the influence of Laski’s ‘crude account of American capitalism....’²⁹ Yet this charge, besides exaggerating the influence of Laski in the Labour movement as a whole, ignores just how much the emotional appeal of American idealism jostled in Laski’s mind with his rational analysis of American capitalism; it ignores Laski’s enduring enchantment with ‘the inner majesty behind all the betrayals and indecencies’ of the country which he always believed that despite all ‘really is the land of promise’.³⁰ If there was an “America Complex” in the mind of Laski or indeed, the whole of the British Left, it was the inability to decide if ‘America’ represented hope or frustration. The tension between the two, reflected in the conflicting images of the United States as the global fountain of idealism or the beacon of reactionary capitalism, is one of the main themes of this study.

ii

Following the dramatic political upheaval of the 1945 elections, the newly-elected Labour Government was expected to begin at once the implementation of the Party’s most cherished objectives – welfare state policies; broad nationalization, commitment to full employment. Yet even this Socialist vision – organized primarily around domestic issues – was profoundly influenced by Britain’s external relations, especially Anglo-American relations. Britain had emerged from the long and gruelling war years proudly victorious but nearly bankrupt; the United States, in stark contrast, was the most powerful nation on earth.³¹ At least in the short

term, some sort of American aid was needed to begin the work of the reconstruction of the nation.

In the ranks of the ruling Labour Party, however, American involvement in British affairs was an idea that provoked anxiety and even outright objection. British Labour, after all, was about to initiate social and economic planning which stood in complete opposition to the wild excesses of American private enterprise. The hostility of some Americans towards the British socialists could easily be gauged from the horrified shock with which Labour's victory was greeted by the American press³²; and confirmation that Big Business and Wall Street were in control, not only of the American press, but also of the American Administration, came with the cancellation of wartime Lend Lease shipments a week after the surrender of Japan. Truman's decision, caught everybody by surprise not least the Chancellor Hugh Dalton whose advisers could have been expected to know more about the requirements of American law.³³ Labour speakers and the Labour press popularized the metaphor 'economic Dunkirk' to describe the immediate financial crisis, and call for a production drive that would harness the nation's capacity for hard work and determination for Socialism. The famous spirit which had defied the Nazis was demanded again from workers and 'patriotic employers' to achieve independence from American dollars and American bankers.³⁴

Negotiations in the next months in search of some form of American help reinforced the bitter resentment at the domineering tendencies of American capitalism. Britain had sacrificed and bled longest to save the whole world, including the United States; it now had to go cap in hand, to ask for dollars and receive diktats from her rich wartime ally. The spectacle was insulting - deeply

insulting. Instead of showing sympathy and proper appreciation of Britain's harsh predicament, the heavy-handed Americans insisted on a Loan that was also part of a financial agreement threatening an American grip over British markets and Sterling reserves. To socialists, regarding themselves as arbiters of Britain's fortunes and future, the national humiliation combined with their own particular inveterate hostility to American capitalism, which was in the words of Michael Foot, 'arrogant, self-confident, merciless and convinced of its capacity to dictate the destinies of the world'.³⁵

The American Loan, however, was perceived by the Labour Government as vital to start British recovery and finance its domestic goals.³⁶ Few objections were made in Cabinet and only 23 Labour MPs voted against³⁷: mainly Left-wingers but also the less-noticed Right-wing fringe of the Party - the likes of the future Cabinet Minister Richard Stokes and the maverick Birmingham businessmen Stanley Evans - whose anger at the 'extremely ignorant' and 'adolescent' Americans led by a pack of 'Wall Street Wolves' was unsurpassed on the Labour Left.³⁸ It was not matched even by the anger of Tory MPs - 74 of whom voted against the Loan despite an official line of abstention - who shared the same alarm at the American threat to Empire markets but could direct most of their anger to the Labour Party which had struck the deal.³⁹

The 'Imperial preference' die-hards of the Conservative Party had no problem, of course, with American 'free enterprise' as long as it remained an overseas model for praise but left Britain and the Empire alone. Tory suggestions that socialist measures were only possible due to American capitalism - proving the superiority of free enterprise over socialist state planning and control - spurred Labour Party

speakers to dismiss American domestic behaviour and achievements. The United States, as a model of capitalist free enterprise, was dragged as a pseudo-target into the centre of a domestic British dispute, to be praised or attacked accordingly (just as it was, as a model of democracy, in the nineteenth century debate on political reform). And the fact that during the Loan ratification debates on Capitol Hill, American congressmen and newspapers added their violent anti-Socialist rhetoric to the Tory attacks on British Labour's domestic aspirations, certainly did not improve Labour thoughts concerning the United States.

Seen in this context, many Labour attacks on the American political and economic system were a partisan response to Conservative polemics, and to a lesser extent American ones. The call in the Beaverbrook press to "Watch America" - the success story of private enterprise - was repeatedly ridiculed in the Labour press in subsequent years by calling attention to American economic failings and social backwardness.⁴⁰ What could Britain learn from the United States, whose own Labour forces were still fighting battles that British Labour had fought, and won, 25 years earlier, and whose ruling political ideologies were considered 30 years behind those of Europe?⁴¹ 'Between this country and America', Tribune responded to Tory praise of American anti-strike legislation, 'lessons on labour-state relations are strictly an export commodity'.⁴² American inflation, editorialized the semi-official Labour Party newspaper, the Daily Herald, on another domestic bone of contention, provided 'a resounding answer to the British Tories who agitate for abandonment of controls'.⁴³

The American column of Arthur Webb, the Daily Herald's principal source of information for these 'lessons', is instructive of the effort to portray American

events as a moral-object to a British audience and the negative image which this facilitated among Labour followers Webb depicted, on a near weekly basis, a 'chaotic' American domestic scene paying dearly for the lack of economic planning and price control: it was ridden by chronic unemployment, poverty, food and house shortages, black marketeers, industrial unrest and political intolerance. 'This is', he wrote in May 1946, 'the most distressful country.... Its people are unhappy, worried and afraid.'⁴⁴ 'The Dawn that Didn't' was his verdict on the 'Great American Century' in January 1947: 'Wherever one turns there is gloom in the American scene.'⁴⁵

In contrast to the poverty and social insecurity in the midst of the most rich and powerful country in the world, socialism was offering Britain a new and brighter future which neither Tory jeers nor the present austerity could hide. 'Home after five years I find BRITAIN Happier than AMERICA', reported in December 1945 a correspondent of Reynolds News, the Left-wing Sunday newspaper of the Co-operative movement.⁴⁶ 'We're happier than the Americans!', declared Fleet Street old-timer Hannen Swaffer in the Daily Herald, comparing the 'calm and resolute' British people to the 'people haunted by strange fears' he had seen in the United States.⁴⁷

British socialists, however, were far less happy, or calm, when the economic chaos and strange fears tormenting the American domestic scene were translated into 'selfish' foreign policies: for how else could one explain the retention of high tariff walls when the world was so much in need of dollars, or even more, the failure to participate in plans for an international Food Board when the starving world was so much in need of the American surplus of food? During a visit to

Washington in early 1946, Richard Crossman observed that Americans realized that a return to isolationism was no longer possible but had 'nothing to substitute for it but a macabre mixture of idealism and very crude business deals'.⁴⁸ Socialists, hoping the United States would respond to the plight of an impoverished world, understood the dichotomy well: the idealism and natural generosity of the American people were obstructed by a political and economic structure allowing 'vested interests' to dominate a 'weak' Administration.⁴⁹

Even more worrying was the American monopoly on the atom bomb and the growth of anti-Soviet sentiment in the United States. The insistence of the 'Atomic Democracy' that it retain atomic secrets was roundly deplored in Britain, Labour opinion demanding that the manufacture of atomic power should be placed with the United Nations as a true sign of international co-operation - and to calm Soviet fears.⁵⁰ Americans who thought they could 'solve all world problems by holding on to the atomic bomb' were wrong and dangerous⁵¹; they could not even solve their own chronic sense of insecurity. 'A strange feature of American psychology to-day', the NS&N commented in August 1946, 'is their fear of the atomic bomb which at the present time they alone possess.'⁵² The Labour MP and brilliant journalist, Tom Driberg, who wrote a highly-praised column in Reynolds News, returned in October 1946 from a two-month tour among the 'lovable' and 'impulsively generous' American people, struck by their 'proneness to collective hysteria' stoked up by the American media. He professed to be astonished in particular by the 'political immaturity' evident in the use of anti-Soviet rhetoric during the 1946 Congressional election campaign. His central observation was that the United States 'may be regarded as a Rogue Adolescent with a Bomb'.⁵³

That 'vested interests' had completely gained the upper hand in the United States was made clear in November with the sweeping Republican election victory - the party primarily identified by the Left with Big Business and Wall Street. President Truman was now the 'prisoner in the White House' and the 'forces of reaction', Arthur Webb reported, were 'firmly in the saddle'.⁵⁴ 'It's best to be British these days', remarked Michael Foot in explaining the election result in his Daily Herald column, because 'Britain with all her manifold burdens, remains the brightest hope of civilised mankind.'⁵⁵

iii

While the image of 'America' as a nation consumed by capitalism and reaction was hardly disputed in the Labour Party in early postwar years, it was Britain's growing ties with the United States that became the greatest dividing issue between the Government and its supporters. The conflict 'which was about nothing less than the shape of the postwar world', Jonathan Schneer argues, 'was among the most important episodes in the history of British Labour'.⁵⁶

Central to this conflict, in a world splitting along ideological and strategic lines, was the disagreement over the foreign policy that a Labour government should execute. As it had developed in the first half of the twentieth century, the Labour Party approach to foreign affairs was based on four Socialist principles which Michael Gordon identifies as follows: internationalism, international working-class solidarity, hostility to capitalism and antipathy towards power-politics.⁵⁷ From the radical liberalism of the nineteenth century it had derived the distrust of force (and

power blocs) as a foreign policy instrument and a belief that national greatness was measured in terms of 'moral leadership'; from Marx, Hobson, and Lenin it learnt to identify capitalism with an aggressive and competitive search for markets and territorial expansion abroad. Once elected to power, a British Labour government was expected to dispense totally with the old and discredited 'Tory' notion that foreign affairs were an expression of national self-interest, and working closely with like-minded 'socialist' governments, to execute a foreign policy aimed at encouraging genuine co-operation between the nations.

It was therefore with great dismay that socialist viewed the diminishing prospects of international co-operation at the United Nations and the ideological polarisation which drove a wedge between Britain and the Soviet Union. For many on the Left, not only the Communists and their fellow-travellers, the Soviet Union still conjured powerful images of socialist salvation that the purges in the 1930s had done little to weaken, and the recent heroism of the Russian people during the war had done much to strengthen. Pro-Soviet sentiment ran very high in 1945 in both the Labour Party and the trade unions, whose leaders had earlier that year helped to create the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), a symbol of solidarity between the trade unions in fifty-six countries, including unions from the Soviet Union and of the American Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). The American Federation of Labour (AFL) would not participate and its extremely anti-Communist secretary, George Meany, was shouted down at the TUC Congress in 1945 when as a 'fraternal delegate' he dared to insist that Soviet trade-unions were 'instruments of the state...and its ruling dictatorial policies'.⁵⁸

If calls for close co-operation with the Soviet Union drew a hearty cheer from any Labour audience, and open criticism of the Russians was not well-received, then the obverse of the ideological coin was deep suspicion, or even outright hostility, towards the United States, the main 'agent' of capitalism in international affairs. And when in the next few years, Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin pursued a policy that was not only very hostile towards the Soviet Union, but sought to involve 'capitalist America' in British efforts to preserve traditional spheres of influence in Europe and the Middle East, a large and vocal minority on the Labour Left regarded this as almost a total betrayal of Labour's old socialist 'ideals' and a subordination of Britain's national independence to the United States.

At the core of their criticism was that Bevin, under the pernicious spell of his Foreign Office advisers, seemed to be directly continuing Tory international power politics. This feeling was reinforced in March 1946 after Churchill's famous 'Iron Curtain' speech at Fulton, in which he called for Anglo-American military co-operation to counter the Soviet Union; this was a proposal Tribune lambasted, for 'a total sell-out to America, offering Britain the role of a junior partner in the great capitalist alliance of an Anglo-American Co. Ltd.'⁵⁹ 120 Labour MPs signed a Motion of protest and further anger was expressed at the fact that Attlee and Bevin had been so 'mealy-mouthed' in their comments on Churchill's speech⁶⁰

The American Embassy was already able to recognize three groups of Labour Left MPs who were agitated by the direction Bevin was giving to Britain's foreign policy the 'crypto-Communists' whose main spokesman was Konnie Zilliacus; the group around the pacifist William Warbey who regarded Bevin as a 'reactionary trade unionist with an anti-Russian and anti-Communist phobia'; and the

'democratic socialists' led by Foot and Crossman who disagreed with Bevin but were equally 'bitterly hostile to Communism' and 'very suspicious of Russia'.⁶¹ The Embassy did not as yet forecast a 'major split' in the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP); but as the year progressed, growing disquiet was expressed on the Labour backbenches and at the annual Labour Party conference in June, where the Labour Government was accused of continuing Tory 'power politics abroad' and the 'day by day' development of a financial and military bloc propagated in the Churchillian vision of Britain as 'the 49th State of the American Union'.⁶²

The Labour Government's role in the origins of the Cold War and the question whether Bevin - or Churchill for that matter - was prepared to 'sell' Britain to the United States have been a source of heated debate ever since.⁶³ There is little argument that in the early postwar years, British needs in the economic sphere were so extreme and difficult to meet that the Labour Government was forced to exercise narrow options and improvise solutions that mostly involved the United States in one way or another; and 'if the corollary of United States intervention and strength is that we find ourselves irked at the role of junior partner', Bevin explained, 'we must recognise, nevertheless, that the partnership is worth the price.'⁶⁴ Just like the Labour Left, Bevin believed Britain was 'a last bastion of social democracy' against 'the red tooth and claw of American capitalism' as much as 'the Communist dictatorship of Soviet Russia.'⁶⁵ Yet the policy he actually carried out in the Foreign Office seemed to be concerned more with the old, supposedly discredited, ideas of 'national interest' than with socialist doctrine as such⁶⁶, elements of which Attlee continued to expound behind closed doors until the Prime Minister was finally defeated by the combined forces of Bevin and the

Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁶⁷ The European 'balance of power', and the global 'assets' of Britain needed for recovery at home, had to be safeguarded from what they believed was a grave Soviet threat. And the only way to ensure that this Soviet threat was met was by tempting the United States to assume some of Britain's oldest responsibilities in the Mediterranean and eventually the military leadership of the West. Did Britain have a 'realistic' option other than to attempt to preserve her possessions by becoming the 'junior partner' of the United States? This is the crux of the argument that occupied the British Left at the time, and historians thereafter.

Yet there was nothing in Bevin's John Bullish tenure at the Foreign Office which indicated a happy acceptance of the American Century. Bevin was prepared publicly to praise the 'idealism' apparent in the American approach to foreign affairs, even though this did not go down well with Labour audiences.⁶⁸ But he could be equally scathing about the United States and the domestic pressures influencing American foreign policy, most notably over American support for Zionism which drew from Bevin the very blunt remark at the 1946 conference that the Americans urged the British to allow 100,000 Jews to enter Palestine because 'they did not want too many Jews in New York.'⁶⁹ Palestine, the most thorny problem in Anglo-American relations in these years, was another place where Bevin in fact had hoped for greater co-operation with the Americans.⁷⁰ There can be no doubt, however, about Bevin's intention to restore Britain to her Great Power status as soon as possible, and to achieve independence of action from the United States. Bevin was full of ideas in the late 1940s about how to regain Britain's financial independence and perhaps, as he told Dalton, even have 'the US dependent on us and eating out of our hand in four or five years.'⁷¹ The best

indication of Bevin's thinking was his reasoning in October 1946 which convinced a small group of leading Ministers to support the secret development of a British atomic bomb 'We've got to have a bloody Union Jack flying on top of it', Bevin explained, so that no future British Foreign Secretary would be 'talked at, or to' as American Secretary of State James Byrnes had just talked to him. No mention was made of the Soviet threat.⁷²

By then, however, the Labour Left was up in arms, openly agitating against Bevin's forfeiture of 'moral leadership', and 'crypto-Churchillian attitude to America'.⁷³ The disapproval of Bevin's foreign policy that had been brewing on the backbenches throughout the year erupted during the King's Speech debate in mid-November 1946 and was the occasion for the first serious challenge to the Government's authority. The events have been well-documented. At the end of October, 21 MPs associated with the 'democratic socialist' group sent a letter to Attlee, warning that the Left-wing intended no longer 'to remain silent'. Expressing their desire for an independent British policy - popular sentiments in one way or another in the country as a whole - they declared that British social democracy had an 'historic role to play', providing 'a genuine middle way between the extreme alternatives of American free enterprise economics and Russian totalitarian socio-political life'.⁷⁴

Three weeks later, while Bevin was away in New York and despite frantic attempt by Attlee to maintain Party discipline, 43 'rebel' MPs (15 more names were later added) tabled an Amendment which called for a 'Socialist alternative to an otherwise inevitable conflict between American capitalism and Soviet Communism'; Crossman, leading the attack on the Government's drift into the

‘American camp’, clashed during the debate with Attlee, who in an attempt to defend the Government’s record claimed that Britain was neither subservient to the United States nor were the Americans as ‘imperialist’ as had been claimed ⁷⁵

Supported by the Conservatives, the Government commanded 353 votes in the division that followed, but more than 100 Labour MPs either abstained or were absent. In Tribune Michael Foot was unrepentant,

A Socialist Foreign Policy is the translation into our foreign relations of the independence we have won at home from the grip of vested interests. But what shall it benefit us to gain a world in Whitehall if we lose it again in the White House or on Wall Street?⁷⁶

The socialist struggle against vested interests - infused with a heavy dose of nationalism - was now fully projected across the Atlantic. Its political and intellectual manifestation was a demand for a Third Force of ‘democratic socialism’.

iv

The Labour Left rebellion of November 1946 displayed the fissures in the Labour Party over foreign policy which would trouble it for many years to come; it was also the first time in British postwar politics that the ‘anti-Americanism’ of the Labour Left was widely discussed. The Economist was deeply impressed by the ‘anti-American bias’⁷⁷ of the rebels while the Manchester Guardian opined that ‘the depths of illiberalism’ and ‘anti-Americanism which peeped out in so many of the speeches’ had revealed ‘how far some of our friends of the Left have drifted away

from the ideals which the Labour Movement has always cherished.’⁷⁸ This was not, however, only the opinion of political opponents of the Labour Party. In the debate, George Brown, a firm supporter of Ernest Bevin and future Labour Foreign Secretary, lamented the ‘dreadful and frightening’ anti-Soviet media hype he had witnessed in a recent visit to the United States; but on hearing the ‘attacking and criticising of America’ by Crossman and other Labour backbenchers, he pleaded not to elevate ‘an anti-American bogey’ like the ‘anti-Russian bogey’ of the Americans.⁷⁹

As will be seen in this study, attitudes towards the United States and ‘anti-Americanism’ would become in future years a key issue between the warring Right- and Left-wings in the Labour Party. In November 1946, however, the matter was not so clear cut. The Cold War had not yet turned all the emphasis from economic to military dangers and the negative image of American capitalism seemed to be equally dominant among the Party’s Right-wing. Were the ‘rebels guilty of ‘an anti-American bias?’, asked Socialist Commentary, quoting The Economist ‘whose views on the matter are certainly shared by many Labour people’. Britain had more in common with the United States than with the Soviet Union, agreed Socialist Commentary, the monthly soon to become the main forum of support for Bevin’s Atlanticism in the Labour Party. But ‘the importance of the ideological affinity between the Anglo-Saxon peoples is often over-stressed, especially in considering what the present rulers of America *actually* stand for in the world’, Socialist Commentary added. The Soviet Union was indeed, at present, the greater threat to peace, but ‘looking at the problem from a long term point of view,’ it asked, ‘can anybody deny that the uncontrolled economic forces of a

highly developed capitalist country such as America constitute a very serious threat?’⁸⁰

The Labour Left itself would have nothing to do with these charges of ‘anti-Americanism.’ Consider Tom Driberg, who in the Debate on the Address proclaimed that the United States was ‘the only great nation’ where some of the ‘ordinary people’ wanted war. Furthermore, it was ‘in the United States that the worship of the dollar and materialism, in its evil as distinct from its purely philosophical sense, and racial intolerance are most acute and most widespread’.⁸¹ This was certainly not a friendly description, yet Driberg did not agree with the New York Herald Tribune (NYHT) that these words constituted ‘an impassioned attack upon the United States.’⁸² In a letter to the NYHT, Driberg found ‘a certain parallel’ between criticisms of himself and the recent ‘attacks on the “anti-Americanism”’ of Jean-Paul Sartre, another European thinker who found that American capitalism and materialism did not stand his test of the ‘purely philosophical sense’.⁸³ Sartre (who was to liken the United States to a mad dog suffering from rabies) claimed in the NYHT in that same week that he was not ‘anti-American’ nor, noting the term’s lack of intellectual rigour, did he really ‘understand what “anti-American” means.’⁸⁴ Driberg, seemingly from a socialist rather than an existentialist angle, complained that his criticisms of American capitalists were no different from his criticism of ‘similar people’ at home and that ‘the warm and sincere tribute’ which he had paid to the ‘fine qualities in the American character’ were ‘conveniently disregarded’⁸⁵

This was to become a regular retort of speakers on the Left, but it was not only a rhetorical game. The Left, after all, had never viewed the United States as a

monolithic disaster; socialist doctrine divided the world according to class rather than countries. During her House of Commons speech against the American Loan in December 1945, Jennie Lee made clear that it was wrong to talk about 'Britain and America' because there were 'two Britains', of the rich and poor, and 'at least two Americas'.⁸⁶ In Tribune that same week, she described a conversation about the Loan she had held with train passengers that 'reached a roaring crescendo of anti-Americanism.' However, hostility to the United States, as the term seemed to imply, missed the point. The 'primitive-minded businessmen who govern American affairs' should not be confused with the American 'people' of whom at least one-third were being affected by the same 'black reactionary programme' threatening Britain.⁸⁷

'After all, "America" can mean almost anything', observed Tribune one year later, in December 1946: 'When we use the word in the present content, we are concerned with the control of a few powerful interests over America's economic life; and the more we get "mixed up," the more will those interests spread into this country.'⁸⁸

A Mass Observation survey in the same month, portraying wide-spread 'anti-American emotion' among supporters of the Labour Party in London, prompted Harold Laski to lament 'this anti-Americanism' as misconceived and 'based on a grave lack of perspective'. It did not take into account the desire of the American people for peace, he wrote, evident since the birth of the American nation, nor did it take into account the extent to which the American reactionary forces were opposed in the United States itself. A bold British initiative would harness those American forces and 'this illusion of American hostility will prove...as bogus as

most generalisations of this kind.’⁸⁹ Thus even when ‘America’ seemed to be completely under the control of reactionary forces, the counter-image of American idealism was sustained by focusing attention on the activities of the American Labour Movement and other liberal forces from which the Left in Britain could draw hope and support.

A long tradition of co-operation between progressives and radicals in both countries indeed went back to the American revolution itself and was manifested during the nineteenth century in co-operation on issues such as the abolition of slavery and suffragette rights.⁹⁰ However, in 1945-46 not all was well in the Anglo-American progressive front. Anti-imperialist emotions on the American Left were stirred by the Palestine issue and the postwar plight of the remnants of European Jewry; and furthermore, at the same time, ironically, that the British Left was suggesting that Britain was increasingly being dragged at the heels of American capitalism, the Left in the United States suggested that their country was being dragged by British imperialism into hostility to the Soviet Union. ‘Are you not a bit out of date in bothering so much about British imperialism, which is in retreat even in India, Burma and Indonesia?’, Kingsley Martin asked in a ‘letter to an American liberal’ in the NS&N: ‘What about your own racialism? And, if you are really worried about Imperialism let me call your attention to the aspirations of some of your own generals and your business tycoons.’⁹¹

Max Lerner, however, to whom the ‘letter’ was directed, replied in the American Liberal weekly, *Nation*, that Kingsley Martin’s remarks were all on the ‘the curiously nationalist level.’ The NS&N and Tribune were themselves making the very same attacks on British foreign policy, he noted, which Martin found

objectionable when made by American liberals⁹² It would be worth remembering the sensitivity of the British Left to the criticism from across the Atlantic. In future years these roles would be reversed it would be Martin and the Left who would complain that some American liberals seemed to resent foreign criticism of American foreign policy which American Liberals themselves habitually made.

Yet as 1946 progressed, the American Left began to target its own Government. The assault on the Truman Administration's descent into the Cold War was led by Henry Wallace, the New Deal's champion of American agriculture, and Roosevelt's Vice-President from 1940 to 1944 when he had won much praise from the British Left for proclaiming the Century of the Common Man. His attacks in September 1946 on British imperialism, which 'in the Near East alone', he claimed, could lead the United States into war with the Soviet Union, did little to endear him to British Labour⁹³, but a long public letter to Truman a week later, spelling out the responsibility of the Administration for the deterioration of the prospects for world peace, found receptive ears on the British Left. Wallace was forced to resign from his post as Secretary of Commerce. His letter, published in full in the NS&N, served as an inspiration to the Labour backbenchers' own revolt, or so claimed Crossman in an interview with the American liberal weekly, the New Republic (which Wallace was invited to edit after his resignation).⁹⁴

Seeking a closer union between British and American progressives, Kingsley Martin and Richard Crossman invited Wallace to visit Britain in April 1947 as the guest of the NS&N. If Left could talk to Left across Europe, then why not across the Atlantic? The visit was regarded as a success, including three highly-attended public meetings and one talk on the BBC, assiduously promoted by Martin.⁹⁵ Even

Tribune, always more sceptical about Henry Wallace because of his 'anti-British' record, thought there might be 'less anti-American feeling' as a result of the visit.⁹⁶ For here was a prominent American politician who spoke the language of the Labour Left and who proved that American idealism was far from being a finished force. As the jubilant Kingsley Martin summed up the visit in his NS&N Diary, the British public could at last hear an American leader urging that the 'colossal surplus' of American wealth should be used for 'raising the standard of living everywhere, instead of in bolstering up regimes merely because they are anti-Soviet.

This doctrine is neither "woolly", nor in the least "anti-American", it is merely a restatement of the New Dealer's remedy for which he and Roosevelt had worked during the War.... It shattered the pretence that the choice before Britain is to be either "anti-Soviet" or "anti-American" It declared that Britain is not finished and can independently exercise great power in the world.⁹⁷

v

The lofty visions of Henry Wallace and his friends on the British Left seemed to have little impact, however, on the march of postwar events or American and British foreign policy. In February 1947, as a shortage of coal in the midst of a harsh winter brought the sense of British weakness and hardship into every home in the land, a Foreign Office note informed Washington that Britain would no longer be able to provide aid to the monarchist regime fighting Communist insurgents in

Greece Much was said in the United States about the rise and fall of nations as the Americans were asked to assume responsibilities in an historic British sphere of influence.⁹⁸ On the 12th of March, Truman asked Congress for an immediate grant of aid to Greece and Turkey by famously stating that 'it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure.'⁹⁹ The Truman Doctrine, committing the United States to the 'containment' of Communism around the globe for the next generation, was received with horror on the British Left. 'This is not the road to peace; it is the road to war', Harold Laski lambasted the Truman doctrine: 'It is the ruthless endowment of the "American Way of Life", all over the world, with a speed that is in itself a monstrous thing.'¹⁰⁰

Such dismay, in fact, was not confined to the Labour Left. There was, no doubt, relief in Government circles that the United States had turned her back further on pre-war isolationism and was prepared to give financial support to British objectives, but there was little joy at the obvious show of British decline and displacement. Bevin himself, for all the talk about his pulling off 'one of the most decisive strokes in the history of diplomacy'¹⁰¹, only grudgingly asked the Americans to take over in Greece in the first place¹⁰²; his 'own paper', the Daily Herald, admitted that Britain's 'role in the world' had changed by these momentous events but 'although her financial resources have shrunk, her right to exert moral leadership has in no sense declined.'¹⁰³

This refusal to accept Britain's lower status in the postwar global order practically dominated Labour language and thought. It was amplified by a sense of disappointment that, despite the great hopes pinned on international co-operation

through the UN, the world was being divided between power blocs in the East and West. And the hostility as a result towards the United States - at this stage still at least as much as towards the Soviet Union - was no monopoly of the Party's Left-wing. The Town Crier, the Right-wing Birmingham Labour weekly to whom all of Bevin's critics were a bunch of crypto-Communist conspirators, lamented the 'tragedy that two nations, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., have been precipitated by events to positions of world power and influence before acquiring the experience and social wisdom vitally necessary for carrying such responsibilities.' Both acted 'as if the British Commonwealth no longer counted in world affairs' and to this cardinal sin the Truman Doctrine added the 'final folly' which left the whole world looking to 'Britain to give a lead.'¹⁰⁴ If the Birmingham Town Crier, as far to the Right as one could get in the Labour Party, is to be taken as a measure, then differences at this early stage of the Cold War between the Left-wing critics and Government supporters seem to be about loyalty to the Labour leadership rather than about opinion of the United States.

In the Spring of 1947, the 'rebels' of the Left were indeed on the offensive. In Parliament, open Left-wing defiance led to an outstanding reduction by the Government of the proposed period of national service from eighteen to twelve months. The opposition in the Labour Party to peacetime conscription stemmed a great deal from pacifist and economic arguments¹⁰⁵, but resentment of the fact that the Americans were to underwrite British men and bases abroad, a situation recently created in Greece, must have contributed too. As one Labour backbencher told an American Embassy official. 'We will not conscript soldiers to be America's Hessians'¹⁰⁶

In late April came the main Left-wing move with the publication of Keep Left, a pamphlet signed by fifteen 'centre-Left' MPs who had been meeting 'informally' since February.¹⁰⁷ While on domestic affairs, Keep Left was mostly a call to intensify socialist measures already being implemented, the real bone of contention between the Government and its critics surfaced in the pamphlet's detailed exposition - mainly the work of Crossman - of the case for an independent British foreign policy. Soviet actions, and subsequent American adoption of Churchill's Fulton policy, Keep Left asserted, were the main reason for the dangerous division of the world into opposing blocs. The British record, however, was also far from perfect. By pursuing a foreign policy that was 'only half-heartedly socialist'¹⁰⁸ - in India it was - Britain had been driven 'into a dangerous dependence on the USA.'¹⁰⁹ Social democratic forces in Europe had been alienated by Britain's anti-Communist policies, while in the Middle East British attempts to maintain an 'imperial position' led to the propping up of reactionary regimes and accepting commitments far beyond Britain's economic strength.¹¹⁰ It was all too reminiscent of the 'criminal folly' of Churchill, and Keep Left called blatantly to 'kill the Tory idea of bolstering up the British Empire with American dollars and fighting America's battle with British soldiers'¹¹¹ A total break with the United States was not suggested. Britain's financial dependence on the United States did not allow that Britain, however, should do everything possible to regain her economic independence while creating a Third Force with the Commonwealth, but in particular with the Socialists of France, to 'prevent the division of the world into hostile *blocs* and the division of Europe into an American and a Russian sphere of influence.'¹¹² And of course, 'in all this', Keep Left asserted that Britain had 'a

special responsibility to the American people': the closest of allies during World War Two at present were dominated by short-sightedness and reaction but would soon respond 'to a lead from Socialist Britain.'¹¹³

That Britain had 'a special responsibility' to guide the perplexed Americans - becoming the Greeks of the American Empire - was a dominant theme in postwar British thought. a belief in British superiority to which few of the Bevinites in the Labour Party were immune either. It was certainly present too in Cards on the Table, the Government's reply to Keep Left, written with Foreign Office advice by Denis Healey, the young Secretary of the International Department at Labour Party headquarters at Transport House.¹¹⁴ Cards on the Table, which was distributed to the delegates at the Party conference at Margate in May 1947, provided a stern defence of Bevin's response to the postwar hostile actions of the Soviet Union. The United States, however, fared only slightly better than the Russians. There was a short attempt to counter the 'facile talk about American reaction and dollar imperialism' by noting the generosity of American contributions to postwar refugee relief and the power of her progressive forces; Britain, however, was 'grateful' for any American financial support 'to defend our security' because it was pragmatic to do so, not for any ideological reasons¹¹⁵ American foreign policy was presented in the pamphlet as deeply flawed, not by capitalism but by a political Constitution and national character preventing a responsible attitude to global affairs.¹¹⁶ The aim of 'Anglo-American understanding' was not only to frustrate the Soviet Union, Healey maintained, but also to make it 'impossible for America to adopt a policy of world-aggression without British agreement.'¹¹⁷ The 'brutal frankness' towards the Soviet Union and 'patronizing criticism' of the United States in the pamphlet,

commented Anthony Eden, was 'a new method of diplomacy by universal insult.'¹¹⁸

When the showdown between the Government and its Left-wing critics finally arrived at Margate, in any case, it was not the attitude towards the United States which divided both sides but the issue of 'loyalty' to the leadership. Left-wing speakers who took to the rostrum - Driberg in particular - criticized violently the turning of Britain into 'an atomic aircraft carrier and an atomic target in a Wall Street war against world Socialism.'¹¹⁹ However, these protests hardly counted on the conference floor, dominated by the deciding votes of the 'big three' trade unions - the General and Municipal workers (GMWU), the Transport Workers (TGWU) which Bevin himself had created, and the National Union of Miners (NUM) - whose leaders shared the Foreign Secretary's mistrust of communism and middle-class Left-wing ideologues.¹²⁰ To this was added the whole weight of Bevin's authority and his mastery of the Conference and the *mores* of the Labour movement. Appealing to delegates' emotions, Bevin accused his critics of stabbing him 'in the back' while he was away negotiating in the previous November not the sort of behaviour one would find 'growing up' in the working-class trade unions. Without entering serious debate on their Keep Left agenda, Bevin had managed to present his Left-wing critics as disloyal outsiders. The rebels had been 'routed', wrote in its headline the Daily Herald ¹²¹ Resentment at Britain's dependence on the United States proved to be a wide-spread sentiment in the Labour Party but not much more. 'How many delegates who applauded Jennie Lee's call for independence and defiance of American finance' were really prepared to face the

consequences, Tribune asked and despondently gave the answer - 'Far, far too few.'¹²²

'The present U.S.A.', Kingsley Martin declared in the NS&N in early June 1947, 'is an expansionist power on a scale never before known to history.'¹²³ The American insistence on multilateral trade agreements in order to open foreign markets to American business while retaining high tariff walls, coupled with support for discredited reactionary regimes from Greece to China, indeed seemed to give ample 'American' evidence to the British Left in the previous two years, that the obvious outcome of capitalism at home was the aggressive search abroad for markets and raw materials. No less important, this expansion was threatening to dominate Britain and displace her from her world role, prospects which injured the patriotic pride present under the ideological layers of socialist internationalism and anti-imperialism on both Left- and Right-wings of the British Labour Party. However, the belief that the United States was responsible for many of the evils of the world was paradoxically coupled with fervent faith in the omnipotence of American power. Therefore if only the United States were to be converted back to the path of virtuous idealism, preferably with the help and guidance of Socialist Britain, most global evils could be, and would be, put straight.¹²⁴

This paradox in Left-wing attitudes towards the United States, this 'America complex', became apparent in the reaction to the famous speech by Secretary of State George Marshall only one week later, regarded even by the sceptical NS&N

as 'the first sign of American statesmanship since the death of Roosevelt'¹²⁵ The European Recovery Programme (ERP) which it heralded¹²⁶, the Marshall Plan, soon transformed the dominant image of the United States on the British Left. After two years of frustration at the American failure to respond to the plight of Britain and Europe, only a gradual change of heart could convince of the seriousness of the newly-found American idealism - 'one Wilson is enough'¹²⁷ - or eliminate the deep hostility to American capitalism which erupted during the convertibility crisis during July-August 1947.¹²⁸ Would political strings be attached to American aid? Could Europe, receiving dollar aid, remain socialist and independent? Could the United States, where anti-Communist 'witch-hunts' and racial intolerance were rampant, preach 'international freedom'?¹²⁹ Despite these lingering doubts, most of the Left was moving in the American direction. hailing the progressive ideas and forces now shaping American policy and placing most of the blame for the divisions of the Cold War on the Soviet Union which had rejected Marshall's offer of aid. By January 1948 the leader of the Keep Left 'rebels' Richard Crossman - notorious for his inconsistency but for that reason also a candid bell-weather of Left-wing opinion - frankly admitted in Parliament that his 'own views about America' had 'changed a great deal in the last six months' and that 'many members had the same experience.'¹³⁰

Notes and References

- 1 Marjorie Bremner, 'An Analysis of British Parliamentary Thought Concerning the United States in the Post-War Period' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of London, 1950); Epstein, Britain - Uneasy Ally, chapters 5-7 and 11; Eugene J. Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy: A Study of the Influence of Ideology (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1960); Bill Jones, The Russia Complex: The British Labour Party and The Soviet Union (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977); Schneer, Labour's Conscience, chapters 2; 3; 5 and 8.
2. Schneer, Labour's Conscience, p. 29.
3. C.J.M. Alport, "Anti-Americanism in Britain", World Review, Vol. 35 (January 1952), p. 23.
4. G D. Lillibridge, Beacon of Freedom: The Impact of American Democracy upon Great Britain, 1830-1870 (London: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955); David Paul Crook, American Democracy in English Politics, 1815-1850 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).
5. Pelling, America and the British Left, p. 18.
6. R.L. Moore, European Socialists and the American Promised Land (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).
7. The British Marxist W.T. Colyer in, Americanism: A World Menace (London: Labour Publishing Company, 1922), lamented - among other vicious complaints - the 'standardisation' of American 'industrial serfdom' which contrasted with the liberating force of Russian Communism. Yet 'Fordism' and 'Americanism' were in fact seen in the Soviet Union in the 1920s as worthy technological for Stalinist productivity and artistic models for creative modernity. See Peter Wollen 'Cinema/Americanism/The Robot', in Patrick Brantlinger and James Naremore (eds.), Modernity and Mass Culture (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 42-69
- 8 Jones, The Russia Complex, pp 16-17, Andrew J Williams, Labour and Russia The Attitude of the Labour Party to the USSR, 1929-1934 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989).

9. Quoted in Wolfgang Wagner, 'The Europeans' Image of America', in Karl Kaiser and Hans-Peter Schwartz (eds) America and Western Europe, (Lexington, Mass : Lexington Books, 1977), p. 25. For an account of Shaw's visit and his prejudices of the United States, see Michael Holroyd, Bernard Shaw, Vol 3, 1918-1950 (London: Penguin Books, 1993), pp 302-314
- 10 John Dizikes, Britain, Roosevelt and the New Deal: British Public Opinion, 1932-1938 (New York: Garland, 1979), chapter 1.
11. Philip Williamson, 'A "Bankers' Ramp"? Financiers and the British political crisis of August 1931', English Historical Review (1984), pp. 770-806.
- 12 Barbara C. Malament, 'British Labour and Roosevelt's New Deal. The Response of the Left and the Unions', Journal of British Studies Vol 17 (Spring 1978), pp. 154.
- 13 Ben Pimlott, Labour and the Left in the 1930s (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 64.
14. Malament, 'British Labour', pp 147. Malament argues that the trade unions, supposedly more interested in the New Deal measures, were no less sceptical.
15. Pelling, America and the British Left, p. 146.
- 16 This search for 'morality' in foreign affairs, probably owing much to 'non-conformist' Christianity, is what critics in the 1950s found wrong in the 'utopian' foreign policy of both the United States and the Left in Britain. See George F. Kennan, Realities of American Foreign Policy (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1954), pp. 3-50; Denis Healey, 'Power Politics and the Labour Party' in R H.S. Crossman (ed.), New Fabian Essays (London: Turnstile Press, 1952), pp. 161-179
- 17 Roosevelt himself seems to have shown some interest in the British Labour Party in the early stages of the war. See David Reynolds, 'Roosevelt, the British Left, and the Appointment of John G. Winant as United States Ambassador to Britain in 1941', The International History Review, Vol. 4, No 3 (August 1982), pp. 393-413
18. W. A. Swanberg, Luce and His Empire (New York: Scribner's, 1972), pp 180-183

- 19 Isaac Kramnick and Barry Sheerman, Harold Laski A Life on the Left (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1993), pp. 398-401. In the 1920s, Henry Luce was a pupil of Laski at Yale.
- 20 Jones, The Russia Complex, p. 135
- 21 For a detailed analysis of the social and occupational composition of the Labour backbenches, see Hugh Berrington, Backbench Opinion in House of Commons 1945-55 (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1973), chapter 3.
- 22 Peter Allen, 'The Meanings of "An Intellectual": Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century English Usage', University of Toronto Quarterly, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Summer 1986), pp. 342-358.
- 23 Pimlott, Labour and the Left, p. 107.
24. For Transport House estimates in 1951 of the circulation of socialist and 'Labour-supporting' press see 'Appendix B' in a report for the 'International Socialist Press Conference, Amsterdam, 3-5 September 1951', in Archives of The British Labour Party, Part 1: NEC Minutes Since 1900 (Brighton, Harvester Press), card 421. See also Jenkins, Bevanism, p. 126.
25. Hughes was, in fact, acting editor since 1924. On his appointment and the early days of Forward, see Graham Walker, Thomas Johnston (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 3-16; p. 65; pp. 92-94; p. 121.
26. C.H. Rolph, Kingsley: The Life, Letters and Diaries of Kingsley Martin (London: Victor Gollancz, 1973), pp. 89-107; pp. 134-137. Another regular NS&N writer who frequently visited the United States and wrote for 32 years for the New Republic, was the ILP journalist H.N. Brailsford. See F.M. Leventhal, The Last Dissenter. H.N. Brailsford and his World (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 204-5
- 27 Edward Hyams, The New Statesman: The History of the First Fifty Years, 1913-1963 (London: Longman, 1963), p. 253.
- 28 Crossman, 'The "Russia" Complex', NS&N, 24 1/1948, pp. 64-5
- 29 Crossman to Dalton, 24/10 1950 Dalton papers, British Library of Political and Economic Science, Part II, 9/10, fol. 33. Crossman was referring in particular to Laski's refusal, in his greatest and largely-forgotten work on the United States, published towards the end of his life, to see any 'profound' changes since the

- New Deal 'in the fundamental characteristics of the American State power.' See Harold Laski, The American Democracy (London: Allen and Unwin, 1949), p. 235
- 30 Kingsley Martin, Harold Laski A Biographical Memoir (London: Victor Gollancz, 1953), p. 221
- 31 Between 1939 and 1945 the American gross national product soared from 91 billion to 212 billion dollars. Britain, which began the war in a net creditor position of approximately £3.5 billion, ended with liabilities of around 2 billion. See Robert Hathaway, Great Britain and the United States (Boston: Twayne, 1990), p. 10.
32. Michael Foot, 'The Election Rings Round The World', Daily Herald, 31/7/1945, p. 2.
33. Ben Pimlott, Hugh Dalton (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 427-9. A writer in Tribune thought the expected termination of Lend-Lease was an 'ill-considered act' that created 'a grave crisis', but it was not an act that should be interpreted as 'a blow aimed by American capitalism at the Labour Government in Britain.' See Ivor Moresby, 'Dollars Don't Grow on Trees', Tribune, 31 8/1945, p. 2.
- 34 Daily Herald, 29/8/1945, p. 2, NS&N, 1/9/1945, p. 137; Birmingham Town Crier, 8/9/1945, p. 4
- 35 Daily Herald, 14/12/1945, p. 2.
- 36 Kenneth O. Morgan, Labour in Power, 1945-1951 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 151; Pimlott, Hugh Dalton, pp. 439-440.
37. The objections came from Bevan and Emmanuel Shinwell. Harold Laski, however, believed some of the agreement's aspects 'did great honour' to the American negotiators. Schneer, Labour's Conscience, pp. 81-2
38. Richard Stokes, H C Debates, Vol. 417, cols. 704-13 (13/12 1945); The Birmingham Town Crier, 22/12/1945, p. 1; In 1940-41, Richard Stokes was involved in the agitation of a small group of MPs to settle with Germany rather than see British power pass into American hands. See Reynolds, The Creation, p. 105; p. 174.
- 39 Epstein, Britain, pp. 41-42

40. Tribune, 5/10/1945, p. 1; Daily Herald, 18/12/1945, p. 2; Reynolds News, 25/5/1957, p. 4; Tribune, 26/11/1948, pp. 4-5.
- 41 Daily Herald, 14/12/1945, p. 2; Daily Herald, 5 11 1946 p. 2.
- 42 Tribune, 31/5/1945, p. 3.
- 43 Daily Herald, 3/7/1946, p. 2
44. Daily Herald, 6/5/1946, p. 2.
- 45 Daily Herald, 2/1/1947, p. 2
46. Reynolds News, 16/12/1945, p. 2.
47. Daily Herald, 15/3/1946, p. 2.
48. NS&N, 9/2/1946, p. 97.
49. Tribune, 24/5/1946, p. 1-2; NS&N, 13/7/1946, p. 20.
50. NS&N, 13/10/1945, p. 239; Jones, The Russia Complex, pp. 107.
51. Tribune, 11/1/1946, p. 2.
52. NS&N, 17/8/1946, p. 109.
53. Reynolds News, 13/10/1946, p. 4.
54. Daily Herald, 7/11/1946, p. 2.
55. Daily Herald, 8/11/1946, p. 2.
56. Schneer, Labour's Conscience, p. 28.
57. M R. Gordon, Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy, 1914-1965 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), pp. 13-44.
58. Denis Macshane, International Labour and the Origins of the Cold War (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 86.
59. Tribune, 8/3 1946, p. 1.
60. Berrington, Backbench Opinion, p. 56; Tribune, 'Who Speaks For Britain?', 15/3/1946, p. 2.
- 61 London to Secretary of State, 20 3/1946. National Archives (Hence NA), Washington D.C., Rg 59, Decimal File 1945-49, Box 5897, 841.00/3-2046.
62. W. Warbey, H C. Debates, Vol. 423, col. 2064-7 (5 6/1946), The 'rulers of America', declared a delegate at Bournemouth, 'the great magnates, the tycoons of finance...hate us, fear us and loathe us. They are not the people to whom we should be tied up.' See Labour Party Conference Report (LPCR), 1946, p. 158.

63. There is an enormous body of literature on Anglo-American relations and the origins of the Cold War. The most comprehensive and detailed case for Bevin's policies is Alan Bullock's, Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). A recent biography which provides a critique of Bevin's foreign policy is Peter Weiler's, Ernest Bevin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993)
64. Weiler, Ernest Bevin, p. 164
65. Robin Edmonds, Setting the Mould. The United States and Britain, 1945-1950 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 28.
66. Bullock, Bevin, p. 109.
67. Attlee had set out many of the 'socialist' foreign policy principles in 1937, in a book much-quoted by the Labour Left and republished in 1949 as The Labour Party in Perspective - And Twelve Years Later (London: Victor Gollancz, 1949), chapters 8-9. Attlee carried these firm internationalist convictions also into Downing Street. He showed a remarkable faith in a supranational body and co-operation with the Soviet Union, and the belief that Britain should relinquish some of her imperial positions in the Middle East. He gave way in January 1947 only after being accused by Bevin of pursuing another Munich and facing a threat of resignation from the Chiefs of staff; see Raymond Smith and John Zametica, 'The Cold Warrior: Clement Attlee Reconsidered, 1945-7', International Affairs (1985), pp. 237-252.
68. The United States was 'one of the remaining remnants of capitalism' and 'menace to any Socialist society', protested one delegate after quoting Bevin from Hansard on the 'great idealism' of the Americans. 'America may be a capitalist country', Bevin replied, but 'that does not mean she always will be' the task of Britain was to work with everybody to preserve the peace, including, of course, the Soviet Union. Bevin certainly knew his audience. See LPCR, 1946, p. 151; pp 167-8
69. LPCR, 1946, p. 165. Palestine was the one issue on which Bevin and his supporters were much more hostile towards the United States than the Labour Left. On the Left, Zionism and Palestine, see Yosef Gorny, The British Labour Movement and Zionism, 1917-1948 (London: Frank Cass, 1983), Stephen

- Howe, Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire 1918-1964 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 148-153.
- 70 Louis W. Roger, The British Empire in the Middle East 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, and Postwar Imperialism (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), Section 4
71. The mineral-barren United States, Bevin said in October 1948, could be made dependent on the British supply of minerals from Africa where 'we have them all.' Ben Pimlott (ed.), The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1918-40, 1945-60 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1986), p. 443. See also Weiler, Ernest Bevin, pp. 174-175.
72. Peter Hennessy, Never Again: Britain, 1945-1951 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992), p. 268.
73. NS&N, 7/9/1946, p. 163.
74. Schneer, Labour's Conscience, pp. 56-57.
75. H.C. Debates, Vol. 430, cols. 526-539; 583-5 (18/11/1946).
76. Tribune, 22/11/1946, p. 2.
77. The Economist, 23/11/46, p. 818.
78. Manchester Guardian, 16/11/1946, p. 4.
- 79 H.C. Debates, Vol. 430, col. 566 (18/11/1946). The plus side of Brown's visit to the United States, which he enjoyed 'enormously', were meetings with all the leading American trade unionists, and being gifted with new Arrow shirts. George Brown, In My Way (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972), pp. 42-43.
80. Socialist Commentary, December 1946, pp. 502-3.
81. H.C. Debates, Vol. 430, cols. 363-6 (14/11/1946) Driberg added that 'whatever criticism can be made of the Soviet Union' it was the only nation which had 'rooted out the greed for money as such as the primary motive of human endeavour and in which, as far as I know, there is no racial discrimination at all '
82. New York Herald Tribune, 16/11/1946, p. 10.
- 83 It seems that Driberg regarded his own never-ending pursuit of more revenue, which his biographer describes in often comic detail, as being of that

- ‘philosophical sense’. See Francis Wheen, Tom Driberg: His Life and Indiscretions (London: Chatto and Windus, 1990).
- 84 Kuisel, Seducing The French, p. 7.
85. NYHT, 28/11/1946, p. 34. Original copy in Driberg papers, Christ College Library, Oxford, file U1.
- 86 H C. Debates, Vol. 417, col. 669 (13/12/1945).
87. ‘As I Please’, Tribune, 14/12/1945, p. 11.
88. Tribune, 6/12/1946, p. 1.
89. Forward, 14/12/1946, p. 3; Driberg, Reynolds News, 29/12/1946, p. 4.
- 90 Frank Thistlethwaite, The Anglo-American Connection in the Early Nineteenth Century (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959), chapter 4.
91. ‘You could write a magnificent article’, Martin advised, ‘demand ng the right of Jewish entry into America - which flows with milk and honey, even if it is not the original Promised Land ’ See NS&N, 19 1/1946, p. 39. See also NS&N, 4/5/1946, p. 313.
92. ‘Answer to a British Labourite’, Nation, 2/3/1946, pp. 251-3.
93. Douglas Richard Ayer, ‘American Liberalism and British Soc alism in a Cold War World, 1945-1951’ (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Stanford University, 1983), pp. 100-103. Writing as ‘Polycritic’ in the NS&N, Crossman found that Wallace’s remarks were not constructive, but that to write that they were ‘anti-British is ridiculous.’ Wallace was one of the few true friends of British Labour in American politics and ‘was attacking, not Britain, but a line-up of American Big Business and our Foreign Office....’ See NS&N, 21/9/1946, p. 201
- 94 NS&N, 28 9/1946, pp. 223-5, New Republic, 16/12 1946, p. 802.
95. Schneer, Labour’s Conscience, p. 46
- 96 Tribune, 11 4/1947, p. 3.
97. NS&N, 19 4 1947, p. 269.
- 98 Manchester Guardian, ‘Burying The Empire’, 4 3 1947, p. 5.
99. Stephen Ambrose, Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938 (New York Penguin Books, 1985), p. 86.
100. Forward, 22 3 1947, p. 1; p. 3.
101. Francis Williams, Ernest Bevin (London: Hutchinson, 1952), p. 264.

- 102 Bullock, Ernest Bevin, p. 369.
- 103 Daily Herald, 13/3/1947, p. 2
- 104 Birmingham Town Crier, 22/3/1947, p. 4
- 105 Berrington, Backbench Opinion, pp. 72-3.
- 106 Memorandum on British 'Domestic affairs - Morale', April 1947, E13, Box 20, Office of British and Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, 1941-1953, RG 59, NA. In public, however, only Konnie Zilliacus voiced his objection to turning young British men into 'cannon fodder' in Wall Street's campaign against world socialism. NS&N, 5/4/1947, p. 228.
- 107 Keep Left by a Group of Members of Parliament: Geoffrey Bing, Donald Bruce, R.H.S. Crossman, Harold Davies, Michael Foot, Leslie Hale, Fred Lee, Benn Levy, R.W.G. Mackay, J.P.W. Mallalieu, Ian Mikardo, Ernest Millington, Stephen Swingle, George Wigg and Woodrow Wyatt (London: New Statesman, May 1947).
108. Ibid, p. 35.
109. Ibid, p. 37.
110. Ibid, p. 37. Keep Left called accordingly for a withdrawal of troops from Greece, Palestine and Egypt.
111. Ibid, p. 46.
112. Ibid, p. 46.
- 113 Ibid, p. 35.
- 114 Cards on the Table: An interpretation of Labour's Foreign Policy (London: Transport House, 1947), p. 6.
115. 'So the jibe', he wrote, 'that America provides the money while we provide the men is simply answered - for that suits us better than providing both the men and the money!' See *ibid*, p. 15.
116. 'The really striking feature of world politics today is not that Russia is frightened of America, but that America, with undisputed control of half the earth and all the oceans, is frightened of Russia'. See *ibid*, p. 6
- 117 Ibid, p. 16
118. The Times, 9 7 1947, p. 8 Dalton too noted that Healey's pamphlet 'had caused a stir among our anti-Americans, though, in fact, it criticises the U S.

nearly as much as the Soviet Union.' See Pimlott, *The Political Diaries*, p. 393. Crossman confided privately that he could agree with eighty percent of Healey's words. See Ayer, 'American Liberalism', p. 188.

119 LPCR, 1947, p. 173.

120. Despite Big Three 'loyalty', other big unions such as the Railwaymen (NUR) and the Distributive Workers (USDAW) were identified with the Labour Left. The Communists had some influence in most unions and full control of the Electrician's Union (ETU) and smaller unions. Martin Harrison suggests that the trade unions movement in the late 1940s was probably on the whole more Left-wing than local Labour Parties; See Harrison, Trade Unions, pp. 216-224.

121. Daily Herald, 30/5/1947, p. 1.

122. Tribune, 6/6/1947, pp. 1-2.

123 NS&N, 7/6/1947, p. 415.

124. A similar tension had characterized the attitudes of the British Left towards their own country's policy in the days of 'apparent' British omnipotence Roy Jenkins, The Pursuit of Progress (London: William Heinemann, 1953), pp. 24-25.

125. NS&N, 14/6/1947, p. 415.

126. In the next four years, around 14 billion dollars of Marshall aid flowed into Western Europe of which Britain received 2,694.3 million. Kathleen Burk, 'Britain and the Marshall Plan', in Chris Wrigley (ed), Warfare, Diplomacy and Politics (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1986), pp 210-230.

127. Tribune, 'Dollars from Heaven', 13/6/1947, p. 1.

128 Until the Sterling convertibility stipulated in the Loan agreement was called off with American consent - there was renewed alarm that, as in 1931, Wall Street with the help of the Tories was trying to bring down a British Labour Government or make it cutback its welfare plans Tribune, 29 8/1947, pp 1-2

129 Harold Laski, 'American Dollars Mean Danger', Forward, 26 7 1947, p 1; 'The Mote and the Beam', NS&N, 6 9/1947, p. 186.

130 H C. Debates, Vol. 446, col. 566 (23 1 1948)

Chapter Three: "How To Like Americans"

Much was heard in 1946-47 about the hostility of the British Left towards the United States. Yet profound antipathy to American political, economic and cultural influence had been widely expressed on the other side of the political spectrum since the nineteenth century. During the Second World War it was Conservative members of Churchill's Government who agitated most against British concessions to American power. Yet a short postwar outburst of emotion at American commercial demands was soon extinguished by the onset of the Cold War and the emergence of what was, after all, regarded even by British Conservatives as a greater threat in the East. Drawing the Americans to Britain's side - a competing Conservative attitude since the turn of the twentieth century and propagated now in Churchill's forceful oratory - became a central tenet of postwar Toryism.

It was left to the mainly Tory-supporting popular press to express resentment at the process of the domination and displacement of Britain by the United States. The 'anti-Americanism' of the popular press became a transatlantic talking point no less than the 'anti-Americanism' of the British Left; however, anti-anti-American efforts to counter British popular prejudice and postwar hostility to the United States only began seriously in response to Communist propaganda, which from 1947 directed vitriol at every aspect of American life. Whitehall and Washington by then could count also on the good-will of the great majority of the non-Communist British Left which had increasingly seen the United States in a much better light thanks to Marshall aid. the most useful anti-anti-American measure of all. Resentment of Britain's inferior position and dependency on the United States was

still evident on all sides, but when the Attlee Government ended its first term of office in 1950, British opinion was firmly behind the Atlantic alliance.

i

On the morning following V-E Day in May 1945, the Daily Mail welcomed the postwar world with an emotional appeal for peace by Lord Vansittart, the former Head of the Foreign Office who had since become an extremely controversial public figure due to his vehement anti-German views during the war.¹ Germany, however, was now defeated and destroyed and the main issue on Vansittart's mind was the prospect of postwar co-operation with the two Grand Allies - the United States and Soviet Union. Lamenting the tensions in Anglo-American relations, Vansittart complained about the 'strong Anglophobe element' in the United States which 'take a wrecker's delight in abusing and misrepresenting us', while 'in substance and in tone' there was in Britain 'no anti-American party or Press . because neither could endure for a season.'²

In the sort of irony that would accompany much of the discussion of 'anti-Americanism' in postwar British politics, Vansittart's admonition was published in a newspaper accused, on both sides of the Atlantic, of pursuing during the war an 'anti-American' editorial line.³ As has been seen in the Introduction, the sense of a bitter global rivalry with the United States was felt most keenly in the interwar years on the British Right and among conservative-minded Whitehall policy-makers; Vansittart himself did not believe at the time that a war between both nations was 'unthinkable.'⁴ British domination and displacement by the United

States during the Second World War only deepened feelings of resentment that were hardly concealed in sections of the Conservative Party and press. In the Northcliffe press in particular, in the Daily Mail and Sunday Dispatch, Britain's suffering and sacrifice were repeatedly evoked in comparison with that of the United States; American admonitions on the Empire or morality in international affairs were presented as an affront to decency itself, and American business expansion - 'high-riding' on British misfortune - were portrayed as even more indecent and despicable.⁵

The most venomous rhetoric in print directed at the Americans could be found during the war, however, in a weekly called Truth which the Conservative Party Chairman, Sir Thomas Dugdale, described in 1942 as the nearest thing the Party had 'to a dependable organ'.⁶ A respectable weekly in business circles and Conservative Party associations, Truth was also notorious for 'anti-Russian and, more markedly, anti-American' views, often combined with a heavy dose of anti-Semitism.⁷ The Jewish Chronicle supported Bretton Woods, Truth explained, because 'co-racials messrs. Morgenthau and White had matters well under control.'⁸

In September 1944, the Daily Mail published an alarmist story about planeloads of American businessmen, disguised as 'junior officers', who were seeking quick commercial advantage in liberated Paris (which, the MOI reported, caused some public concern).⁹ Truth followed this up with its own article headlined 'Enter the Jackals' in which the behaviour of the Americans - bearing no resemblance to those good Anglo-Saxon virtues inherited from England but instead smacking of the 'stink of the Levant' - was angrily denounced, though Truth was polite enough not

to accuse the American 'people' as a whole; no doubt they too were equally upset by the rotten apples in their barrel responsible for the sorry creation of 'anti-American feeling' in Britain.¹⁰

The venomous rhetoric of Truth was but an extreme expression of the feelings which ran deep in the Conservative Party, even among those who did not harbour the same racial hostility to some Americans or all Jews; the intellectual leader of the Tory imperialists for one, Leo Amery, was a dedicated Rhodes Scholarship trustee (and supporter of Zionism).¹¹ Yet his staunch imperialist convictions produced an ambivalent desire for an 'arms-length friendship' with the Americans characteristic of many other Conservatives such as Lord Beaverbrook.¹² Hopes that a strategic 'understanding' would help to contain European and Asian challenges to British supremacy were coupled with extreme anxiety about the threat to the British Empire posed by American anti-colonialist politics and economic power. Amery, Beaverbrook, and dozens of Tory MPs agitated throughout the war against American multilateral policies designed to break-up the Empire as an economic unit and inherit British markets.

However, by the time that multilateralism seemed to be imposed on Britain by the postwar American Loan, the Conservatives were out of office, and Leo Amery out of Parliament. The Loan debate in December 1945, in which eight Tories voted for the Loan and seventy-one voted against despite an official line of abstention, was a 'fiasco' that exposed the failure of Party management in the early days in opposition, but also the deep divisions in attitude towards the United States.¹³ Most Tory speakers during the American Loan debate still followed the Churchillian wartime line of not saying too nasty things in public about the

Americans; their anger was directed instead at the Labour Government which had agreed to the Loan.¹⁴ Yet some such as Bob Boothby, while dramatically accusing Labour of 'selling' the Empire for a packet of (scarce) American cigarettes, also bitterly criticized the American termination of Lend- Lease and imposition of terms designed 'to break up, to prise open, the markets of the world for the benefit of the United States of America.'¹⁵

Even those Tories searching for American support and inspiration in the domestic battle against socialism were deeply humiliated by the Loan debate on Capitol Hill in the following Spring and by the way some American congressmen spoke about Britain - or her Labour Government.¹⁶ At the annual Party conference at Blackpool in October 1946, Lord de L'Isle and Dudley, a future Cabinet Minister in the 1950s, castigated the 'powerful men' in the United States who still thought 'George the Third reigned in this country and Lord North was the Prime Minister'. Leo Amery's assault on the American 'dishonest demand' that the Empire should be economically broken up was greeted with stormy applause.¹⁷ An observer from the American Embassy was left bewildered:

I had been struck in America by the consistently anti-American tone of the British leftist press, and of many of the speeches of certain Labor party people, both in Parliament and out . . . I had not felt that there was as much hostility toward us in Conservative circles as in the Labor Party. . . . I was therefore surprised to find that the Conservatives were . . . in their discussions on imperial preference . . . quite as strongly and unreasonably anti-American as any section of the Labor Party. One speaker after another got up and said that America wanted to see the British Empire dissolved and wanted

to make it an economic and then a political satellite of the United States
 There was a good deal of talk of American imperialism. All statements of
 this sort were widely cheered, as though this were the sort of talk that the
 delegates had come to Blackpool to hear.¹⁸

However, warm words in Churchill's concluding speech praising the Americans
 whose abandonment of isolationism constituted 'the main bulwark of the peace of
 the world' were also greeted with great cheers.¹⁹ After all, it was their great
 wartime Leader who had been the main propagator since 1940-1941 of the policy
 of enlisting the United States to bolster British power, which Ernest Bevin had now
 adopted in the Foreign Office. Churchill preferred cultural and historical
 terminology, explaining in November 1945 in Parliament that 'the British and
 American peoples come together naturally' as 'they speak the same language, were
 brought up on the same common law, and have similar institutions and an equal
 love of individual liberty'.²⁰ At Fulton five months later, Churchill preached again
 what he believed was the 'fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples',
 only this time Churchill famously called for this 'special relationship' between the
 British Commonwealth and the United States to include also the 'common' study
 and solution of 'potential dangers' which meant, of course, the Soviet Union.²¹

Churchill's anti-Sovietism did not strike an immediate chord in all Tory hearts.
 Eden as late as December 1946 still privately lamented the inflammatory nature of
 the Fulton speech.²² The growing perception of a Soviet menace, however, added
 to the weight of Churchill's authority, was enough to soften considerably the tone
 of the criticism of American multilateralist pressure. In the annual Conservative
 Party Conference in 1947 there was still the same talk of the need to 'resist

America' over tariffs. Yet critics of the 'mistaken' American trade policy, such as Leo Amery, emphasized also the importance of Anglo-American co-operation to ensure global peace and freedom.²³

With the Soviet Union looming large over the European and the Middle-Eastern horizon, commercial issues were secondary to the need for the 'understanding' preached by Churchill and performed by Bevin. Even more than in 1940-1941, Britain's economic and strategic dependence on the United States, resented as much as it was, turned the Anglo-American alliance into the corner-stone of the Tory postwar approach to foreign affairs, synonymous with the 'national interest'. Why was it that 'to be anti-Soviet is all right, but to be anti-American all wrong', asked the Communist MP Willie Gallacher in 1946. 'We should be British through and through, but if I were compelled to make a choice - which I do not want to be compelled to make', replied the Conservative MP Cyril Osborne, 'I should be pro-American.'²⁴

So that was the 'pro-American' reasoning in the Conservative Party. Indeed it was the global division along ideological and strategic blocs that muffled for a decade, until a short-lived eruption during the Suez crisis, the resentment in the Conservative Party of Britain's domination and displacement by the United States. Tories were as resentful as any other quarter in British political life of the postwar hegemony of the United States; from time to time Tory concern would be heard about the wisdom of American foreign policy, and grumbling would appear with every new GATT conference. However, the Soviet menace was always a more intimidating final arbiter of post-war emotions and Conservatives were usually careful not to say anything that might anger their American allies. It was perhaps

easier for Tories to associate with and admire the domestic image of 'American capitalism'. Yet it is interesting to speculate what kind of attitudes would have emerged - and in public - towards the United States in the Party of the Empire, had the Cold War not subsumed the clash between British and American national interests

ii

British worry that openly-expressed criticism of the United States might encourage American isolationism, had become a feature of Anglo-American relations since World War Two. Only towards the end of the war, when a setback in the Ardennes combined in December 1944 with a torrent of abuse in the American Congress and press on the British conduct in Greece, did the British seem to loose their nerve with their American allies in public. The Economist, while describing itself carefully as an 'obviously Americanophil' journal, declared that it was time for 'plain speaking' and bitterly attacked the official 'appeasement' of American opinion which had resulted in criticism from 'a nation that was practising Cash-and-Carry during the Battle of Britain.'²⁵ The article unleashed some sections of the popular press, of which the most vocal was the Tory Daily Mail, for a fortnight of transatlantic verbal warfare until the furore ended with passionate reminders of the common sacrifices and casualties.²⁶

After all, even in terms of the Fleet Street journalistic impulse, the war against Germany and Japan, not against the Hearst press, was the "story of the century" And after the war such passionate calls for 'Anglo-American understanding' would

not disappear, when the new threat from the Soviet Union emerged. Newspapers and weeklies associated with the Labour Left and Communists excepted, the full support of the British press was given to Bevin's policy of encouraging American global involvement in order to bolster Britain's threatened position, though not before the Foreign Secretary exploded with anger at the 'jelly-fish' attitude towards the Soviet Union of The Times of London itself.²⁷

An indication of the postwar consensus on foreign affairs was the position taken by the political 'middle ground'. It was reflected in the attitude of the diminished postwar Liberal Party, but more importantly in the influential Liberal press, where the support of American global involvement to help in dealing with the Soviet threat was reinforced by the old sympathy for American liberalism and idealism.²⁸ Liberal newspapers such as the Manchester Guardian and Observer became the most fervent supporters of the Anglo-American alliance, even when their image of American idealism was seriously dented by the excesses of American domestic anti-Communism.²⁹ The News Chronicle, often critical of the United States in the past, became a passionately Atlanticist newspaper after the editor Gerald Barry was replaced in January 1948 by Robert Cruickshank, Head of the MOI's American Division during the war and an English-Speaking Union activist after, his American wife edited the American Survey of The Economist, another liberal-cum-conservative organ very conscious of the fact that half its readers were to be found across the Atlantic.³⁰ The good faith of The Spectator, owned by the E-SU founder Sir Evelyn Wrench, was naturally also assured.³¹

Thus the 'quality' British press, including Conservative newspapers such as the Daily Telegraph and Sunday Times, could only sing the praise of the gradual

postwar American assumption of global responsibilities, though it was usually emphasised that the Americans were still in the process of 'steadily' learning the leading role previously reserved for the experienced British.³²

British resentment at American postwar hegemony, however, could be gleaned from the pages of Fleet Street popular newspapers, which were mostly owned by Tory-supporting press barons and staffed by middle-class writers. The process of Britain's displacement by the United States clearly went down much less happily here, especially when the American newspapers attacked British imperialism in Greece or Palestine, or worse, treated Britain as a spent force. 'Bewildered' Americans had been told by their reporters in London that the United States was 'undisputedly the world leader' now that 'the British Empire has collapsed', complained Don Iddon in the Daily Mail in March 1947.

We are being given the full funeral treatment. On Monday we are Athens, crumbling to dust. On Tuesday we are Constantinople, crashing in ruins. On Wednesday we are Rome, declining and falling at Rocket rate. We are also Spain just before the death rattle; China during the disintegration: Babylon, Persia, and any other relic and broken place-name you can think of.³³

Envy and resentment of American prosperity - 'gluttony' in the language of the Sunday Dispatch³⁴ - dominated reporting from across the Atlantic. On days when they woke up on their better side, Tory newspaper editors could find only good words to say about the American domestic scene as a paradisiacal example of private enterprise. More usually they concentrated on the kind of sensational human-interest stories which conveyed an impression that sex, violence and the

worship of teen-agers, rather than the inflation and Labour struggles described by Arthur Webb in the Daily Herald, were the dominant features of American life. The view of the American Embassy - which with painstaking detail kept its hand on the pulse of the British press - was that Lord Rothermere's Daily Mail and Sunday Dispatch, with the Beaverbrook press and the Communist Daily Worker, made up the 'group of Americophobe papers in London.'³⁵

National rather than ideological resentments seemed to account for the style of news commentary and reportage. Scottish daily newspapers, 'without exception... middle or right politically', noted the American Consulate in Glasgow, were resentful of 'the English' rather than 'the Americans' and therefore largely responsible (together with closer ties of blood due to emigration) for 'the favorable view of America' which extended, claimed the Consulate, through all classes in Scotland.

Anti-American sentiment in England - what there is of it - is a fairly complex subjective phenomenon allied to the historic xenophobia of the English, and exacerbated by the flag-waving and sensationalism of the nationally-circulated London popular newspapers. Considered as a matter of national frustration alone, it is an expression of annoyance or distrust, partly directed toward the United States. But . Scots consider England the source of their national frustration. They are vigorously working off part of this frustration at home, and the outward expression of it - the "jaundiced eye" - is directed at London.³⁶

Transatlantic comment on the attitudes of the British press towards the United States was not confined, however, to State Department memoranda. It became, in

fact, a subject of animated discussion in the American press. In 1941 Henry Luce, owner of the weeklies Time and Life, celebrated in the pages of Life the new American Century. Yet one of the first casualties of the American Century seemed to have been American popularity. 'One of the ironies of America's position today is that, although she is the richest and most powerful country in the world, it is doubtful whether she is the most popular', wrote Mark Bonham-Carter in The Spectator. 'Yet in America', he made an observation that some Americans themselves were making at the time,

popularity is much more important than elsewhere and has, generally speaking, attained the status of a virtue. ... It is, therefore, with considerable bewilderment and some disappointment that Americans read reports from England and Europe showing that recently this popularity has declined and anti-Americanism increased.'³⁷

British observers always related this bewilderment to the worrying prospects of a resurgence of American isolationism, but for the brand of Republican interventionism which Henry Luce represented, this was not the case. 'What do Europeans think about America? And who cares?', Time asked. 'Americans must care, not because they hanker to be loved by all the world (as some probers of the American psyche have suggested) but because the U.S. is engaged in a crucial contest with Soviet Russia for the world's faith and allegiance.'³⁸

In Britain, the main target of the American press was "Don Iddon's Diary" in the Daily Mail, a popular column containing an American-style mixed bag of Washington politics and Hollywood stardust. Time described its writer Don Iddon as 'a sleekly combed English reporter' who 'leaves the impression that most

Americans guide their lives by astrology, gorge themselves on thick steaks, give their daughters \$10,000 debuts and are all ready to jump into aluminum pajamas and lead-foil brassieres at the first hint of Atomic attack.' Whether this was what Don Iddon wanted to write, or what the public wanted to read, cut across one of the oldest questions in the history of the relationship between the press and the people. Time thought that Iddon 'usually tries to be kind to the U.S. in his own way' but never forgot 'that the tune Britons like to hear has a "Rule, Britannia!" theme.'³⁹

Fred Vanderschmidt, a veteran London-based writer of Time's weekly rival, Newsweek, believed that 'British newspapers had certainly done more to create and increase and solidify anti-Americanism than any other medium.' He did not mean, of course, newspapers of 'high integrity' but the Daily Express, which at least was not 'intentionally anti-American' (whatever that meant), and especially the tabloid Daily Mirror, which in order to increase circulation was 'anti-American both by conviction and calculated intent.' Vanderschmidt did not forget Iddon either. It was a consensus, he wrote, of the American correspondents in London that Iddon was 'responsible for an important number of British misconceptions of America, and for a lot of protracted bitterness toward Americans.'

I don't wish to imply that Don Iddon is basically anti-American. Certainly his newspaper, the Daily Mail, is a sincere, if sometimes mistaken, friend of the United States, and its editor, the brilliant Frank Owen, is basically pro-American.

Down below Temple Bar in Fleet Street, however, you will find a lot of anti-Americans in the woodwork ..., you will find unkempt and embittered

has-beens, often bitterly and sullenly resentful of the decline of their profession, their country and their personal fortunes. Many take it out on “the Yanks,” to whom they were trained to feel superior⁴⁰

‘When they call anything anti-American’, Don Iddon responded to such American accusations, ‘you can bet your rationed, restricted, red-taped life that that means pro-British.’⁴¹ His employers related it all to American sensitivity and exaggeration: ‘We do not believe that one-third of the British people are anti-American’, an editorial in the Daily Mail declared in January 1948 following American reports: there were indeed some ‘fanatical anti-Americans’, mostly Communist ‘dupes’, but ‘a nation is not crazy because it contains a normal quota of half-wits.’⁴²

Public opinion polls, which for all their limitations were free of transatlantic journalistic polemics, tended to confirm, however, American estimations, that there was a good postwar market for resentment of the United States. A Mass Observation study in January 1947 found that the percentage of those saying they were favourable to ‘the Americans’ had dropped from 58 percent in 1945 to 22 percent in the following March and 21 percent in December 1946.⁴³ ‘There has been an alarming increase in anti-Americanism since the war ...’, noted Mass Observation director Tom Harrison in 1947, though it was also ‘almost impossible to measure in public opinion polls since it is not “socially respectable” to be openly anti-American here at present, and Britons are less ready to speak to a stranger (an interviewer) against the *status quo*’⁴⁴

iii

Concern about British public attitudes towards the United States was soon translated into anti-anti-American action. In fact, already in November 1945, when Churchill proclaimed in the House his belief that the 'British and American peoples' come together 'naturally', there was some worry about their readiness to do so 'naturally' even among those most committed to the Churchillian concept of the 'English-Speaking people'. The Tory MP Cyril Osborne, for instance, an E-SU member involved in the hospitality schemes for GIs during the war, noted in the same debate the lingering wartime popularity of the Soviet Union in Britain (which he approved of), but pleaded with Herbert Morrison, who was in charge of the Government's information services, 'to "sell" America to the English people, as he has "sold" Russia to them'.⁴⁵ Osborne, and Lord John Hope who spoke in the same vein, had the support of the whole House in this plea, added the independent MP and journalist Vernon Bartlett, because they had 'got away from the political side of things and down to the feelings of ordinary people in the United States and this country.'⁴⁶

As has been seen in the introductory chapter, wartime efforts to sell the 'ordinary' Americans to the British people were in actual fact far greater than those designed to popularize an already-popular Soviet Union. Vigorous anti-anti-American efforts to counter ignorance of, and hostility to the United States were made by Whitehall, Washington and a plethora of Anglo-American voluntary organizations. However, as the GIs began to disappear from the British landscape, so too did the official enthusiasm to improve popular attitudes towards the

American allies The Ministry of Information, responsible for Anglo-American relations on the public level during the war, was replaced in 1946 by a Central Office of Information (CIO) acting merely as a service department to information sections of other Whitehall departments.⁴⁷ The British-American Liaison Board set up to solve problems between the American troops and British civilians during the war was disbanded too; a suggestion for a “British-American Committee” at a ministerial level to co-ordinate in peacetime all the bodies involved in this field was ruled out by Bevin, who believed that it would interfere with normal Government work.⁴⁸ The FO would thus become the centre of Whitehall’s postwar anti-anti-Americanism.

Smoothing out relations with foreign powers on the level of public opinion is a significant part of all FO work, but this was never truer than in the early postwar years when Britain was dependent on the United States for her economic well-being and security. Unity of purpose at the level of administrations was not regarded as enough; Britain’s fortunes were believed in the FO to be determined by the way it was perceived by a volatile nation of ‘mercurial people, unduly swayed by sentiment and prejudice rather than by reason’, whose policy was ‘to an exceptional degree’ at the mercy ‘of electoral changes....’⁴⁹ Through the British Information Services (BIS) the FO operated in the United States in the late 1940s an unprecedented peace-time propaganda campaign designed to offset adverse attitudes to British socialism and persuade the Americans ‘that Britain was a good long-term investment, an indispensable Cold War ally, and a leader in Europe.’⁵⁰

It was in this context that FO concern for expressions of British hostility to the United States in these years should be seen. Whether it was caused by an American

newspaper article dealing with ‘anti-American sentiment’ in Britain⁵¹, the ‘bitterly anti-American’ proclamations of a Labour MP lecturing in the United States⁵², or what the BIS called ‘the small group of Labour rebels who held pro-Soviet leanings and therefore tended to be anti-American’⁵³, the possible effects on American opinion were those foremost in the FO mind. American isolationism, and American Anglophobia, were perceived as the greatest threat to ‘Anglo-American understanding’ and British interests, not the irritations at home.

This did not mean that nothing was done to improve the image of the United States in Britain. There was enough public enthusiasm for Anglo-American ‘understanding’ in Britain to bring about an impressive postwar rise of E-SU membership figures from 11,292 to 21,819, organized in dozens of local branches and committees managed from new headquarters located at Dartmouth House in London.⁵⁴ Most of the voluntary work done by the E-SU in the early postwar years, such as hospitality schemes for American tourists or the American GIs stationed in Germany, was indeed geared to help FO efforts to ‘project’ Britain to the United States and educate the Americans about British aspirations and aims.⁵⁵ Something, however, was always expected to rub off on the British side too, for example through teacher exchange schemes administered by the E-SU and Board of Education, and intended to spread knowledge on both sides of the Atlantic.⁵⁶

A slightly eccentric example of these efforts was a broadcast in June 1950 entitled ‘How To Like Americans’. A British teacher who had returned from a year in the United States, ready to dispel prejudices of American life, told his BBC listeners how he had overcome his own ‘anti-Americanism’ - his envy of American

wealth and dislike of American manners - and found himself actually 'liking Americans': a 'pleasant condition' and 'most politically desirable.'⁵⁷

BBC anti-anti-Americanism was usually conducted on a more regular and less bizarre basis. The BBC continued to broadcast after the war programmes such as 'transatlantic quiz', a popular wartime show in which participants on both sides of the Atlantic fired questions about their respective countries to teams of experts, led on the British side by the knowledgeable Denis Brogan.⁵⁸ To the regular current affairs programme "American Commentary" - the envy of FO officials involved in propaganda in the United States⁵⁹ - the BBC added in early 1946 Alistair Cooke's weekly "Letter from America", intended to deal with stories on American life beyond the political headlines.⁶⁰

The onset of the Cold War in 1947, and the need to counter Communist propaganda, gave the real postwar push to British anti-anti-Americanism. Postwar Communist hostility to the United States emerged in Britain as elsewhere slowly but surely. During the 1945 election campaign, the CPGB concentrated on the theme of 'Big Three' unity and the Party's initial support for the Labour Government even led its two MPs to vote in favour of the American Loan.⁶¹ But as the relations between the Soviet Union and its former allies worsened and the Communist hopes of affiliation to the Labour Party were dashed in 1946, the CPGB became increasingly hostile to the Labour Government and the 'American spider' seeking to catch Britain in its capitalist web⁶². Communist rhetoric, which became even more aggressive after the launch of the Marshall plan discussions, was followed in September 1947 by the creation of the Communist Information Agency

(Cominform) to co-ordinate the propaganda efforts to wreck 'the American Plan for the Enslavement of Europe.'⁶³

The Americans themselves, however, were by now ready to enter the Cold War propaganda fray. The OWI was abolished after the war and the Information Services (USIS) were run on a low level by the respective local Embassies. However, the Administration's resolve to improve the 'official' American propaganda machine increased as the international scene deteriorated and the United States became the main Communist target. In December 1947, the newly-created National Security Council called for the creation of a co-ordinated 'information' programme 'to influence foreign opinion in a direction favorable to U.S. interests and to counteract effects of anti-U.S. propaganda.'⁶⁴ Congress responded with the Smith-Mundt Act, the first legislative charter in American history for a peacetime information and educational exchange programme. Administered by the State Department, its aim was 'to promote a better understanding of the United States' abroad and increase 'mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.'⁶⁵

Britain was a relatively low priority in early American propaganda efforts. Communist subversion was much more serious in Italy and France, where in 1947-1948 the Central Intelligence Agency was running its first anti-Communist campaigns.⁶⁶ The Smith-Mundt Congressional Committee that toured Europe in late 1947 was also worried, however, about the level of USIS activities in Britain, which had come almost to a stand-still when the OWI ceased functioning. The result was a fifty percent increase in funds, which enabled the USIS to expand its

information facilities and cultural activities and to open a new office in Glasgow (which was later moved to Edinburgh).⁶⁷

All these American activities had British backing but 'propaganda addressed to the British public by a friendly foreign government has no precedent', warned the Head of the Treasury's Economic information Unit, who added that American 'publicity' plans should be executed on a low-key and selective approach like the BIS in the United States, lest it 'goes further than any other foreign power (since the Vatican in Henry VIII's day) has ever gone in this country and feeds the "Fortyninth State" argument.'⁶⁸ This advice seemed particularly potent as not all USIS aims in Britain would have pleased the supporters of the Government of their British hosts. The USIS policy-makers still believed as late as 1950 that Labour's policies on welfare represented 'a profound social revolution' which might 'in the long run take Britain beyond the bounds of liberty and democracy as we know them'; and one of their aims was 'to portray frankly and fairly the American system of free enterprise and individual initiative, and present boldly the advantages of this modern American capitalist democracy over state socialism.'⁶⁹

What the Whitehall and Washington propagandists on the British home front did share, however, was the desire to present 'the Americans' as worthy Cold War allies. The outburst of Communist activity in late 1947 induced the Labour Government to embark on an anti-Communist propaganda campaign among its own supporters in the Labour Movement, in particular in the trade unions where Communists dominated several small unions and were prominent in some of the bigger ones⁷⁰ And as Communist propaganda was intended in large part to vilify the United States, anti-Communist counter-propaganda was in effect also anti-anti-

American, designed to explain, as Ernest Bevin tried to do in the House of Commons in January 1948, that the United States were not the 'country misrepresented in propaganda as a sort of Shylock of Wall Street, but a young, vigorous, democratic people' ⁷¹

iv

Bevin received some of the most significant help he could hope for, though not on an official basis, from none other than Tribune, the most influential organ of the Labour Left.⁷² The dreaded division of Europe had occurred, despite all the warnings, but it was the Russians who were finally to blame by rejecting in summary fashion the American offer of aid. An independent British alternative was still the heart-wish of many: Attlee himself had spoken in a Party broadcast in January 1948 about Britain's leading Europe by providing a 'middle way', fusing the 'political freedom' denied in the Communist world and the 'economic planning' and social equality sadly absent in the United States.⁷³ Yet behind closed doors Bevin was already busy laying the foundations of the Atlantic alliance, and his Left-wing critics were twisting and turning to fit the idea of the Third Force to the new Cold War circumstances.⁷⁴ The Cominform's declaration of war on the social-democratic 'fascists' of Western Europe meant that Moscow, and not Wall Street, was the principal enemy of the Third Forcers. The Marshall Plan, in contrast, considerably improved opinion about the Americans, and if there were forces in the United States which wanted to turn the Marshall Plan solely into a Cold War

weapon to 'save Europe from Communism', Tribune lamented, then the violent 'anti-American line' of Soviet propaganda was helping them to do just that.⁷⁵

In January 1948, after some editorial changes, Michael Foot took full charge of running the weekly and invited David C. Williams to act as a sort of unofficial 'American editor' in order to increase Tribune's American coverage.⁷⁶ Williams had developed contacts with Tribune since 1946 as representative in London of the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), an organization of American liberal 'interventionists' who wanted to help explain British Labour aspirations in the United States.⁷⁷ This, however, meant increasingly also explaining American affairs to British socialists, not least the ADA's hostility to 'fellow-travelling' Henry Wallace. Williams arranged ADA-sponsored tours in the United States for Labour MPs such as Patrick Gordon Walker and Jennie Lee, who in December 1947 informed Tribune readers on her return that it was the ADA who were the 'non-Communist Left'.⁷⁸ The earlier enthusiasm for Henry Wallace, now supported mainly by the Communists and their sympathizers, all but waned because of his opposition to the Marshall Plan, while his decision to stand as an independent candidate in the 1948 Presidential elections threatened to split the progressive vote.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, Tribune had great faith in other forces of progress operating in American life and letters from angry readers did not deter it from preaching this faith loudly⁸⁰. Behind the offer of Marshall aid were the trade unions and the ADA, 'the best liberal elements' in the United States', Tribune observed in January 1948. There was still that 'darker' spirit of the 'American Century' and 'ugly moods of fanaticism and racial fury' were 'not so far beneath the surface', but Tribune was

confident that 'sanity and idealism can win the great argument in the United States'.⁸¹ The passage of the Economic Recovery Bill in Congress seemed to confirm this belief. It was closer 'than many dared to hope' to the original offer, admitted the NS&N, which continued to reflect the Marxian scepticism of Martin, Laski and G.D.H. Cole⁸²; and even more importantly, the conditions of austerity without Marshall aid would be too harsh.⁸³

As long as the Americans would not be allowed to interfere with the domestic progress of British socialism or force Britain into a dubious economic Western Union, then both the Government and Labour backbenchers agreed that Marshall aid was the best way to restore Britain's economic independence.⁸⁴ In July 1948, despite grumbles and abstentions, only two Labour MPs joined the four Communists and former Labour Party 'fellow-travellers' in voting against Marshall aid; they were numerically less, in fact, than the eight Tory die-hards following the Beaverbrook line of politely refusing to be on the American 'dole' and relying on the Empire to bail Britain out.⁸⁵

Always pushing the Left even further in the American direction were the revulsion and fear of the Soviet Union. The Soviet grasp of Eastern Europe was finalized by the infamous Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948 and pressure was applied from March on the Western section of Berlin. In a deteriorating international scene where the emphasis had shifted from economic to military confrontation, the Labour Left found it easier to identify more closely with the United States which, despite being the main agent of international 'capitalism', shared with the British social democrats the important ideal of 'political freedom'. The main threat of war came not from the 'few' American 'hot-heads' but from the

‘totalitarian’ Soviet Union, explained Tribune, ‘for the United States, with all her imperfections, is a democracy. And the instinct of American democracy, like that of most other democracies, was to get back as quickly as possible to the ways of peace’⁸⁶

An indication of the Labour Left’s primary concern with the Soviet threat was the silence on the informal ‘invitation’ and arrival in July of the first American bombers during the Berlin blockade crisis. Nobody knew of course that the American military presence being recreated in Britain would remain until the end of the Cold War; the casual official announcement spoke of two B-29 medium bomb groups arriving for ‘a short period of temporary duty.’⁸⁷ Yet it is still worth noting that only the Communists, who launched their ‘peace offensive’ on the same day, and a few pacifists and communist sympathizers in the Labour Party, expressed indignation at the establishment of what in future years would become *the* political symbol of American domination and main focus of Left-wing emotion.⁸⁸

An American observer at the Party conference at Scarborough in May 1948 found, in contrast, ‘remarkable... friendliness towards the United States’ and that ‘almost the only evidence of anti-Americanism’ were ‘a number of ugly anti-Semitic and anti-American interruptions’ when a Jewish delegate expressed his appreciation of the immediate American recognition of the State of Israel⁸⁹ Palestine, however, for all its passion, was a passing episode in Anglo-American relations, and any lingering criticism of President Truman’s pandering to the New York Jewish vote disappeared very fast after his remarkable victory in the November 1948 Presidential elections. The American result was hailed by the Labour Party as a victory for Anglo-American progressives and a good omen for

the British election to come.⁹⁰ 'Salute to America!' headlined Tribune, celebrating 'a victory for the common people all over the world.'⁹¹ Greater things were to come with Truman's announcement of the Fair Deal 'Truman Goes to war against the American Tories', Tribune exalted with the full support of American labour the New Deal was 'under way again'⁹²

This was the kind of 'America' with which British Labour could much more happily associate. In April 1949, the Anglo-American alliance, of which Churchill was the prophet and Bevin the main architect, was realized with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. In the House of Commons, there were murmurs of discontent from William Warbey at the triumph of Fultonism and many other Left-wingers abstained, but only four Labour MPs voted with the Communists against the Treaty.⁹³ Ian Mikardo resigned from Tribune's board of directors in protest at the weekly's support of the Atlantic pact, but Michael Foot responded, explaining that American changes in 1948 had offered British socialists a choice between the two superpowers, and that choice was the United States.⁹⁴

With a little help from Whitehall and Washington, the far-Left MPs in the Labour Party were dealt with too. The most well-known was Konnie Zilliacus, the half-American, Yale-educated, suspected crypto-Communist, and Gateshead MP, who never tired of denouncing the drive for a new world war of the 'Anglo-American alliance, dominated by Washington.'⁹⁵ Since late 1947 Zilliacus had been isolated for a 'purge', Labour Ministers in the FO told the American Embassy that Zilliacus was possibly involved with the Cominform and his trips to Eastern Europe were closely followed⁹⁶ The FO was concerned also about a visit by Zilliacus to the United States in late 1947.⁹⁷ By early 1949, when he intended to embark with

Wallace on a speaking tour, the State Department denied him an American visa, a decision Zilliacus claimed was made in consultation with the British Government.⁹⁸

Six days after casting his vote against NATO, Zilliacus (along with three other Left-wingers) was expelled from the Labour Party.⁹⁹

In the trade unions, Communist officials were purged from elected posts while in January 1949 the TUC and CIO resigned from the Communist-dominated WFTU which the AFL had refused to join in the first place.¹⁰⁰ That was forgotten; only Communists were to blame for global divisions since the launch of the Marshall Plan and increasingly favourable references were made in TUC publications to the role of American trade unions and Labour.¹⁰¹ Such information on the American Labour scene had been happily supplied to the TUC by the OWI during the war and USIS after 1945.¹⁰² The intention was to reach the labour 'rank and file', who while holding the views that they had been taught by 'the Left-Wing intellectuals', observed an American Labor attaché at the stormy 1947 conference, about the 'incipient depression and Fascism in America...

cannot be shaken in their firm belief, common to English workingmen, that the American worker gets a fabulous salary, and lives comfortably in a cottage complete with all conveniences and a new car every year. They are sincerely eager to hear more about America and especially anxious to believe that the country is not going all-out for reaction and a disastrous slump.¹⁰³

After Marshall aid began to flow, the efforts of the Labour attaches to help British workers 'hear' more about 'America' were stepped up by the London mission of the European Economic Administration, whose energetic Labour Information

Officer, William Gausmann, began furnishing Labour 'leaders and journals' with material on Marshall aid and American labour prepared in Washington and the ECA headquarters in Paris.¹⁰⁴

v

Soviet behaviour and Marshall aid had thus brought both Left and Right in British politics to accept the Anglo-American alliance, some more enthusiastically and some less. Looking beyond the ideological and strategic divisions of the Cold War, however, to the troubled encounter with American culture in the broadest sense of the word, different and hostile attitudes emerged across the whole spectrum of British political life and among the anti-anti-Americans in Whitehall.

Consider the expressions of wounded pride, in the nation which had given the industrial revolution to the world, when the Anglo-American Council on Productivity was announced in July 1948. The idea that British industrial output might be improved by consulting American methods drew angry responses from both sides of the House: Anthony Eden protested that British industry 'based on quality rather than quantity' needed no foreign advice, while Left-wingers spotting another 'sell-out' compared British 'craftsmanship' with the American 'mass-production' unsuitable to 'the psychology and temperament of British workers'.¹⁰⁵ The level of indignation caught even the Chancellor Sir Stafford Cripps by surprise. He was no admirer of the American Way of Life, and his main intention in thinking up the Council was to show American critics that British industrial practices were worthy of Marshall aid.¹⁰⁶ Resentment, however, soon gave way to a more

practical partisan desire to use the American examples to score domestic points, with employers focusing on the merits of competition, and on the lethargy of the British work-force while trade unionists highlighted the better management skills in the United States ¹⁰⁷

Such partisan polarization never occurred, however, in responses to American mass culture. An American film producer boldly claimed that American films represented a 'Marshall Plan of Ideas' but this was one Marshall Plan that not many in Westminster (or Whitehall) wanted.¹⁰⁸ In the late 1940s, the last significant attempt in British postwar history was made to stem the engulfing tide of American mass culture and curtail the domination of Hollywood in British cinemas.¹⁰⁹

It was Britain's financial weakness that provided the justification and means for cultural protectionism. The scarcity of American dollars meant that all British imports from the United States were subject to a strict quota policy operated by the Board of Trade. Requests by Time, Life and Newsweek to increase their import licenses during 1946 were turned down despite urgent pleading by the American Embassy, because of the shortage of dollars and opposition of paper-rationed British publishers.¹¹⁰ Whitehall agreed that these magazines might improve the 'understanding' of the United States in Britain, but fear was expressed that increasing their import, in particular Life, would open the gate to other American printed products 'from near-Life types, such as Look, down to the trashiest Wild West pulp.'¹¹¹ This was the essence of Whitehall's anti-anti-Americanism: 'to explain' the United States by all means, but not to precipitate 'Americanization'.

Whitehall's sensitivity on this issue was necessarily intensified by the hostility in Westminster to American cultural influence. There was no British equivalent to the

‘Cola wars’ which raged in the French National Assembly in 1949 in response to vigorous postwar marketing of the product described by the Coca-Cola Company officials as ‘the most American thing in America’ and ‘the essence of capitalism’¹¹²; the only reference at Westminster in these years to Coca-Cola was the assurance given by the Ministry of Food to Barbara Castle, that there was no dollar expenditure involved in the sales of Coca-Cola (manufactured in Britain by the local subsidiary).¹¹³ There were plenty other aspects of ‘Coca-colonisation’ in Britain, however, which provoked both Labour and Tory MPs to prod the Government repeatedly on the scarce dollars spent on importing American periodicals, popular fiction, comics, films, song rights and stage shows, all thought to be detrimental to British culture and morals.¹¹⁴ Hollywood films were the main focus of discontent; cinema admissions reached an all-time record in 1946 costing one-thirteenth of Britain’s expenditure on food.¹¹⁵ Since well over half the films screened were American, the demand to put ‘food before flicks’ resulted in August 1947, at the height of the Loan crisis, in an attempt to impose a duty of 75% on imported films. Hollywood’s big producers responded, however, with an immediate boycott that ended eight months later with a British capitulation.¹¹⁶ The prodding in Parliament, nevertheless, continued on other American mass culture imports. Was it ‘necessary at the present time’, protested Fred Erroll in 1949, a future Tory President of the Board of Trade, to import ‘1,200,000 cheap American novelettes and Hollywood romances ... bearing titles such as “Murder by Marriage,” “Love is the Winner,” “Miss Dilly says No,” “Lady Godiva and Master Tom”?’¹¹⁷

Calls for cultural protectionism were often followed by high-minded efforts to stimulate British alternatives of a 'higher' standard. One of these was the setting-up in 1949 of a State-funded National Film Finance Corporation to subsidize independent British production.¹¹⁸ The concern for promoting local production (and employment) in the Labour Party was also due to pressure from the trade unions involved in the entertainment industry. Yet cultural arguments were enough to make even Conservatives happily support ventures such as the Government's National Theatre Bill; one Tory backbencher expressed hope that it would enable theatre-goers to see productions of *Hamlet* as well as the American musicals "*Oklahoma!*" and "*Annie Get Your Gun*" which had conquered the West End, while Labour Left-winger and education worker Leah Manning believed it could improve the language of British children so many of whom 'speak in clipped and ugly tones, using inelegant American idioms.'¹¹⁹

This patronizing desire to improve the cultural standards of 'the masses' dominated much middle-class thinking on popular leisure, not least among socialists of the Labour Party. A fervent preoccupation with aesthetics had characterized British socialism since its earliest days, best captured by G B. Shaw's aphorism that William Morris could not get on with the Webbs because he could not stand their furniture. Despite a reputation for philistinism, another British middle-class tradition, Beatrice Webb herself made the much-quoted statement that Fabians aimed to collectivize 'the kitchen of life' so that 'all may have freedom for the drawing-room of life....'¹²⁰ Fifty years later, the cultural context of British socialism could not have been more pronounced. Labour's New Jerusalem would be a place where 'responsible' citizens would renounce the 'Americanized' popular

press, and American films, and tune in to hear serious discussions of politics or art on the elitist Third Programme, launched by the BBC in 1946.¹²¹

The Labour Minister of Education Ellen Wilkinson hoped that Britain would become a Third Programme Nation.¹²² Another elitist concern was the preservation of local 'folk' cultures.¹²³ The influence of American mass culture was therefore resented no less for its eradication of the cultural characteristics of different parts of the country. Lord Keynes, the first chairman of the Arts Council and principally responsible for its emphasis on the provision of State support for metropolitan 'high culture', announced nevertheless that the newly-founded Art Council's aim was to 'let every part of England be merry in its own way. Death to Hollywood.'¹²⁴ Official British postwar culture, at the centre and the peripheries, was to be defined in opposition to American mass culture.

Indeed, the response to American mass culture seemed to be governed by class, rather than by national or partisan loyalties, though these had influence too. George Orwell - an acute social observer who showed great interest in attitudes towards the United States - believed that before World War Two 'anti-American feeling in Britain' was 'a middle-class, and perhaps upper-class thing, resulting from imperialist and business jealousy and disguising itself as dislike of the American accent etc. The working class, far from being anti-American, were becoming rapidly Americanized in speech by means of the films and Jazz songs.'¹²⁵ Envy of the American GIs, he noted during the war, had spread hostility among the working-class but by 1948 Orwell was sure again that the phenomenon was a minority affair:

To be anti-American nowadays is to shout with the mob. Of course it is only a minor mob, but it is a vocal one .. I do not believe the mass of the people in this country are anti-American politically and certainly they are not so culturally But politico-literary intellectuals are not usually frightened of mass opinion. What they are frightened of is the prevailing opinion within their own group At any given moment there is always an orthodoxy, a parrot-cry which must be repeated, and in the more active section of the Left the orthodoxy of the moment is anti-Americanism.¹²⁶

Far up north in the Hebrides busy writing Nineteen Eighty-Four, the Socialist radical, who was fast becoming a Cold Warrior, seemed to have missed the change of attitudes in Tribune, where he had until recently been the literary editor, and to which he attributed this 'anti-Americanism'. Orwell would have been much more correct by now to search for the 'politico-literary intellectuals' of the Left mainly in the NS&N, where a fundamentally conservative contempt for the culture of the 'the masses' was amplified by ideological concern about the prospects of Britain (and the rest of the world) being swamped by 'the teeming factories of Hollywood dishing out canned-culture by the million-feet' and 'the fecund presses ready to pour out acres of print about the American Way of Life '¹²⁷

Socialists hoped Labour Britain would offer a cultural alternative, but it did not. Britain did not become a Third Programme nation, after all, the listening masses opted for the 'light' Programme with American songs and style of entertainment. If anyone expressed the disappointment of many middle-class and Left-wing intellectuals, it was the playwright and essayist J.B. Priestley, whose often-repeated thoughts on the threat of American mass culture were summed up in an NS&N

article written in August 1948: no casual piece but one which the John Bull of the literary Left privately hoped would contain some 'bits of real new thinking.'¹²⁸

It hardly did. He made the all too familiar complaint that the 'blazingly patriotic' Tory popular press, by concentrating on American events and entertainment, was turning London into 'merely one provincial city in a cultural community of which New York is the capital.' A firm stand, Priestley demanded, was needed against 'American Big Business Culture' which exchanged 'a life with roots for a lot of cheap rootless stuff, a shoddy cosmopolitan pavement-culture produced for profit, exported to us by psychological misfits.' To state such an opinion was not Communist 'fellow-travelling', he emphasized; American, not Russian culture, was flooding Britain and against this threat his voice was raised 'loud in protest.' British civilization, of course, still had much to offer both superpowers - and a whole world in need of 'real values'. Yet if all the British 'editors, journalists, impresarios, radio producers, publishers, advertisers' who in the last few years were 'busy turning our folk into second-rate Americans' had their way, he concluded (at the height of the Berlin crisis), 'then whether we linger on the stage or are blown clean off it hardly matters.'¹²⁹

Priestley's bizarre surmise shows how far the creative anger of the Man of Letters could be taken by the process of Britain's domination and displacement by the United States. Such bitterness, however, indicates something more profound than national resentment alone. American films or the Americanized popular press were an obvious target for intellectuals such as Priestley - Michael Foot called him in Tribune 'the High Priest of the new defeatist cult' - to give vent to pent-up feelings of alienation from a social revolution which had failed their own aesthetic

standards.¹³⁰ Perhaps, suggested Tosco Fyvel, Orwell's successor as literary editor of Tribune, 'many British left-wing intellectuals ..because they must repress their dislike of the British version of the Age of the Common Man.. give vent to it with all the more vehemence against the American version.'¹³¹

However, responses on the British Left to American cultural influence were not wholly negative, and they displayed the same dichotomy observed in political attitudes. Even Priestley too would gladly 'open all our doors' to American 'high' and especially radical culture.¹³² Indeed, it is hard to imagine the culture of the British Left in the twentieth century without the cultural contribution of American radicalism. Jack London's "Iron Heel" and "The Jungle" by Upton Sinclair had been devoured in working-men's libraries since the turn of the century; American radical plays such as Clifford Odets' "Waiting for Lefty" and Irwin Shaw's "Bury The Dead" were the greatest hits of the communist Unity Theatre in the 1930s; and Paul Robeson's "Ole' Man River" moved every British socialist heart.¹³³

Furthermore, the idioms of American mass culture seemed to affect not only the British working-class, but also some of those claiming to speak on their behalf. The Communist MP Willie Gallacher - who had a sister in Chicago and who confessed to enjoying, when he was still allowed entry, strolling the streets of New York¹³⁴ - said in Parliament in July 1949 that Ernest Thurtle was 'nuts', after which Thurtle, the old Labour MP who viewed American films with disgust but was a firm supporter of NATO, demanded an apology from Gallacher, who had used the 'language of the gutter.'¹³⁵ 'This is surely a needlessly harsh description to apply to the indigenous idiom of New York and Hollywood', Ian Mikardo taunted in Tribune, noting in a perceptive observation that could have been applied to many

MPs on both sides of the House, that Thurtle was 'at all other times one of our greatest Amerigophils [sic] (not, I suspect, that he loves America so much but that he hates Russ a more)....'¹³⁶

The potential dangers to the free West contained in American bebop dancing were not lost on the authors of a JIC report too, who warned in 1948 that the Communists would use anything to further their aims 'from national governments in Eastern Europe to "jitterbug" clubs in the East End of London.'³⁷ Both Communism and American mass culture were equally subversive forces to the established order of things; the latter caused the British anti-anti-Americans almost as much worry as the Communist machinations

In the Treaty of Brussels, the defence treaty signed in March 1948 by Britain, France and the Benelux countries, the signatories agreed to make every effort to extend popular understanding of 'the principles which form the basis of their common civilization.'¹³⁸ The same commitment was made in Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty, but a senior FO official noted with worry during Anglo-American discussions on the shape of NATO information activities that 'American "culture" as represented in practice by their films, strip-cartoons, glossy magazines with pictures of luscious blondes, etc' was anathema to 'other Brussels powers' and there was 'much in the American "way of life" which is repugnant to religious and other elements in Western Europe.'¹³⁹ He could equally have been talking of course, about some 'elements' in Britain, where an important USIS objective was 'to dispel British prejudices, misapprehensions, and distorted views of the U S whether inherited from historical tradition or projected from Hollywood'¹⁴⁰ This was an American propaganda endeavour that the anti-anti-Americans could happily

accept. Arthur Dodds-Parker, A Conservative MP who later became a junior Minister at the FO, indeed pressed the British Government to loan from the USIS one of its exhibitions, so that the British people could be given ‘a more accurate impression of American life than is displayed in the average Hollywood film shown here’¹⁴¹

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USIS policy-makers, however, whose job it was carefully to assess British attitudes towards the United States, seemed to understand well that both the political and cultural resentments were underpinned by the process of Britain’s domination and displacement by the United States; that the British people were becoming ‘painfully aware that they were no longer able to maintain their former position as a great world power’ and that ‘extra emotional strain’ was being focused on Anglo-American relations because Britain’s ‘leading position’ had passed to the United States.¹⁴² Just how much Britain’s inferior fortunes were resented on all sides seemed to be evident in the financial crisis of the summer of 1949, when an American recession and an alarming drain of gold and dollar reserves forced the devaluation of the pound’s rate against the dollar by a third from 4.03 to 2.80.¹⁴³

Before the crisis was finally resolved with American co-operation at the Washington talks in September, the humiliating insults hurled at Britain in the United States seemed to have been too much for Britain’s ‘blazingly patriotic’ popular press. Don Iddon cabled to the Daily Mail readers that ‘the wraps are

off...every day in every way Britain is told what to do, where to go, when to stop.... The American press and politicians have taken over our affairs....¹⁴⁴ And the Mirror Group's Labour-supporting Sunday Pictorial exploded,

WE BRITISH ARE TIRED OF YANKEE INSULTS! Here is our reply to America's LIES and SLANDERS... Too many of you Americans are being fooled by grasping bigoted tycoons, by brash around-the-world-in-one-day politicians, and your lying anti-British press.¹⁴⁵

This type of Fleet Street rhetoric was admittedly not as calm and level-headed as the editorials of The Times usually quoted on these matters by historians, but it was read by five million more people, and thus seemed to bank on a considerable amount of popular resentment.

It is important, however, to stress that much of this carefully manipulated anger was directed at political opposition at home, at least as much as at the United States abroad. With the 1950 elections around the corner, a great deal of talk about British decline and domination by the Americans was part of a Tory attack on the Labour Government which had supposedly brought the nation to this sorry state. Far from condemning the chorus of American critics, some Conservatives actually joined their attacks on the Labour Government, which, they claimed, had encouraged extravagant spending and soft living on American bounty.¹⁴⁶ Labour Party spokesmen such as Michael Foot wasted no time in assailing in Tribune 'the unholy alliance against Britain' of Tories on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁴⁷ There was no way, however, that a repeat of 1931 would occur, despite the 'let's-crawl-on-our-bellies-to-America brigade.'¹⁴⁸ British Labour had an ally in the White House itself, and after the Truman Administration dealt a blow to British Tories by

offering good-will at the Washington talks, Tribune explained, Britain was safely 'on the road to independence.'¹⁴⁹

American aid, or more correctly British dependence on American aid, which had occasioned partisan polemics since the American loan in 1945, reached its height towards the 1950 elections. No 'responsible political leader' would 'deliberately stir up the latent anti-American feeling in Britain', estimated a study in the State Department at the onset of the campaign, but added that it would be 'difficult to contain this feeling in the heat of the campaign if British dependence on the US becomes an electoral issue.'¹⁵⁰ In the event, Britain's dependence on American aid was one of the main bones of domestic contention, but there seemed to be little evidence of 'anti-American feeling', especially in relation to foreign and defence affairs. The fact that Labour's manifesto, Let Us Win Through Together, made no mention of Marshall aid was highlighted by Conservative and Liberal critics who claimed that only American aid allowed the Labour Government to carry out its welfare policies and keep unemployment figures down.¹⁵¹ The Labour tactic of omitting mention of Marshall aid seemed, in fact, to have introduced it into the election campaign with added force, forcing Attlee in his last election broadcast gracefully to concede that 'it is true that we have had generous help from the Commonwealth and the United States, but that doesn't detract from your peace-time effort any more than lend-lease deprives Britain of its credit for its share in winning the war.'¹⁵² The Anglo-American alliance was hardly mentioned in the campaign, reflecting a consensus on this matter in British political life. Even the Labour Left had mostly acknowledged the facts of NATO life, though the fact that the Labour Party manifesto mentioned neither defence matters nor NATO was an

indication of the discomfort in the Labour Party with the Anglo-American connection (which the Tories stressed).¹⁵³

If anything, however, the 1950 elections, from which Labour emerged victorious but with a largely-reduced majority of 315 MPs to the Tories 298, proved that for all the popular resentments, indulgence in extreme hostility towards the United States was not a vote-catcher, as evidenced by the débâcle of the Communist Party. 'Britain is being turned into an American colony' the CPGB election manifesto declared, calling voters to resist the 'political and economic limitations' set by the Marshall Plan and to end 'the military occupation of Britain by American troops and bombers and the restoration of Britain's national independence.'¹⁵⁴ Almost each and every Communist election address contained an attack on 'Yankee financiers' and the invasion of Britain by the 'swaggering, arrogant Yanks', followed as could be expected by the benefits of peace and trade with the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁵ Rejection of the CPGB's support for Moscow was probably greater than disgust with their aggression towards the United States, but still the election result was a disaster for the Communists, who lost both their MPs, and their deposits in 97 out of 100 seats they contested; Zilliacus and the other expelled Labour 'Independents' fared little better, and all lost their seats too.¹⁵⁶

The route of the Communists and their sympathizers had proven that the British people were firmly on the side of the Americans in the Cold War, despite socialist fears of American capitalism, despite Tory fears of American multilateralism, despite the flag-waving of the popular press, and despite the distaste of the political elite for American mass culture. Unlike France and Italy, there was certainly no need to include Britain in the anti-Communist Campaign of Truth declared by the

USIS in April 1950.¹⁵⁷ The British people and the r representatives at Westminster - Tories, Liberals, and most Labour people too - seemed to have already learnt by themselves from Stalin 'how to like Americans': and that was on Britain's side.

In the first half of 1950, British opinion of the United States seemed more mellow than at any other time since 1945.¹⁵⁸ There were of course points of diplomatic friction such as the American unwillingness to follow Britain and recognize the victorious Communist regime in China; or closer to home, the continuous American pressure for greater British integration with Europe, which drew from Bevin himself public criticism of the American disregard for British sovereignty.¹⁵⁹ However, Marshall dollars continued to flow to Britain and Western Europe and the American Point Four aid programme for developing areas, together with Britain's Colombo Plan, suggested the possibility of the World Fair Deal that the British Left desired.¹⁶⁰ And in the Labour Party's pamphlet European Unity, written by the Bevinite Denis Healey and published in June, the concept of a Federal European Union acting as Third Force was repudiated for the very reason that the Atlantic (and Commonwealth) connection was deemed more important; the Americans moreover, were presented as 'more progressive' than the French and Italians who had elected Right-wing Governments¹⁶¹

Yet further to the Left, even in this period of relative goodwill, ideological fears and emotional objections to Britain's domination and displacement by the United States were still well evident. The possible effects of an American slump and the

consequences of American 'free trade' convictions - not to mention the appearance in the background of the China Lobby and Senator Joe McCarthy - were fearfully rehearsed in Tribune.¹⁶² The NS&N, which never fully followed Tribune into the Democratic Party camp, still pined for a mediating Third Force, dismissing the 'Labour Party's new ideological Anglo-Americanism' in which Britain was turned into an American 'air-craft carrier' and 'junior partner' in an Anglo-American alliance.¹⁶³ There was clearly enough in the British Left for the anti-anti-Americans to worry about besides the influence of the CPGB and of Hollywood films. Molly Hamilton of the FO Information Department, outstanding among her colleagues for being a life-long supporter of the Labour Party, noted in May 1950 with disdain the 'poison disseminated every week' by the NS&N. It made, as she had 'frequently' told a senior USIS official in Britain, the job of 'selling America to the British people today at least as hard' as that of the BIS in the United States, 'since the pacifists and sentimentalists find it convenient to talk of U.S. domination.'¹⁶⁴ A month later, the Korean war broke out and considerably raised both the level of the British Left's protests against American 'domination', and the anti-anti-American urgency in Whitehall and Washington to do something to counter the upsurge of Left-wing hostility.

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13. John Ramsden, The Age of Churchill and Eden, 1940-1957: A History of the Conservative Party (London: Longman, 1995), pp. 99-100.
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- 32 M.D. Graham, 'British Attitudes Towards America: An Historical and Empirical Study' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1951), chapter 4, pp. 10-11.
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35. James C. Saplington to Secretary of State, 26/4/1949. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1945-49, Box 5977, 841.9111/4-2649.
36. Report by Patrick O'Sheel, 2/2/1950. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511.41/2-250
37. The Spectator, 5/3/1948, p. 281. In Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman, first produced and published in 1949, Willy Loman constantly hammers into his sons the idea that it is important not only to be 'liked', but to be 'well liked.' See Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman (Harmondsworth, Middlesex Penguin Books, 1961), p. 23; p. 25; *passim*.
- 38 Time, 29/11/1948, p. 30.
- 39 Time, 12/2 1951, pp 52-56
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- 50 Caroline Anstey, 'The Projection of British Socialism: Foreign Office Publicity and American Opinion, 1945-50', Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 19 (1984), p. 418.
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- 58 In 1946 the Tory press was still urging the BBC to establish a link to the Russian 'people' with the same sort of programme. See the Sunday Dispatch, 'Let's Meet Russia On The Air', 28/7/1946, p. 4. 'Transatlantic quiz' was taken of the air in 1947 because of the dollar shortage, but was brought back for thirteen weeks during the Festival of Britain in 1951
59. M. Hamilton to L. Wellington, 1/12/1945. BBC Written Archives Centre, E1/109. The partisan wartime 'Russian Commentary' of Alexander Werth was ended in September-October 1945.
60. In late 1946 Cooke's "Letter" was already moved to an hour when more people could hear it. See T.B. Radley to A. Ebsen, 20/12/1946. BBC Written Archives Centre, 'Alistair Cooke', Radio Recordings, File 1, 1941-46.
61. Communist Election Policy (London: Communist Party, June 1945)
62. American Spider by Arthur Clegg (Communist Party London, January 1947).
63. World News and Views, No 42, 1/11/1947, p. 497.
- 64 Ninkovich, The Diplomacy, p. 135.
- 65 John W. Henderson, The United States Information Agency (New York Praeger Publishers, 1969), p 41.
- 66 Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, The CIA and American Democracy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp 49-52. Britain was, in fact, more of a participant in American activities See W. Scott Lucas and C J Morris, 'A Very British Crusade: the Information Research Department and the Beginning of the Cold War', in Richard Aldrich (ed), British Intelligence Strategy and the Cold War (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 85-110.

- 67 Report on 'The United States Information Service in Europe', pp. 1-6 NA, RG 59, Records of the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs 1945-1950, Subject File 1945-1950, Box 6
- 68 Note by S C. Leslie, 20/10/1949. PRO, CAB133/54 His warning was related more specifically to Marshall aid publicity from the ECA London mission
- 69.Embassy to State Department, 'USIE Country Paper - Britain', prepared by Mallory Browne (Public Affairs Officer), 8/2/1950. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511.41/2-850.
- 70 Peter Weiler, British Labour and the Cold War (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), Chapter 6.
- 71.H.C. Debates, Vol. 446, col. 402 (22/1/1948). This did not mean that American values were to included in Britain's own propaganda abroad Labour Ministers in the FO such as Christopher Mayhew hoped British propaganda would carry a distinct 'anti-Capitalist' message, though they also disallowed any attacks on the United States. See Weiler, British Labour, pp. 205-6.
- 72.The FO's secret anti-Communist propaganda campaign abroad was of course kept by the Government well away from the knowledge of the Labour Left See Interview with Christopher Mayhew in The Times, 18/8/1995, p. 8.
- 73.Quoted in The Times, 5/1/1948, p. 6.
- 74 Bullock, Bevin, pp. 529-531; Schneer, Labour's Conscience, pp. 64-73, 90-94.
- 75.NS&N, 'The Cominform', 11/10/1947, p. 283; Tribune, 'C.P. Aid for Truman', p 3.
- 76.Ayer, 'American Liberalism and British Socialism', p. 262.
- 77.Among the leading figures of the ADA, founded in 1941 to encourage the inclusion of progressive elements in American interventionism, were Reinhold Niebuhr, James Loeb and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. It also enjoyed the support of Mrs. Roosevelt and Walter Reuther of the CIO.
- 78 Patrick Gordon Walker, 'Who Are Britain's Friends and Enemies in the U.S A ', Tribune, 4 4 1947, pp 1-2; Jennie Lee, 'All Sorts of Americans', Tribune, 5/12/1947, pp 9-10. For details on Jennie Lee's trip (which she did not incidentally enjoy), see Ayer, 'American Liberalism', pp 237-8

79. Kingsley Martin, however, hoped that at least Wallace's Party would become the long-awaited American Labour Party. See the NS&N, 10/4/1948, p. 289.
- 80 One Tribune reader sent an angry letter accusing the weekly of joining forces with Churchill, Transport House, Bevin and the Daily Herald. See Tribune, 6/8/1949, p. 10.
- 81 Tribune, 'Meet Senator Taft', 30/1/1948, pp. 1-2.
82. NS&N, 20/3/1948, p. 226.
83. NS&N, 13/3/1948, p. 207.
- 84 Edmonds, Setting the Mould, chapter 15; Tribune, 10/9/1948, pp. 1-2.
- 85 H.C. Debates, Vol. 453, cols. 338-9 (6/7/1948), On hearing that Time made a compilation of hostile Daily Express views on the United States, Beaverbrook immediately rushed into print an editorial which said that the newspaper had 'never, never' questioned the 'high ideals' and 'noble motives' which inspired American policy, only the wisdom of Britain's participation in these plans. See Time, 26/4/1948, p. 63.
86. Tribune, 'Secrets of the Kremlin', 4/4/1948, pp. 1-2.
87. The Times, 17/7/1948, p. 4. For background on the establishment of the bases, see also Simon Duke, US Defence Bases in the United Kingdom (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 29-36.
88. In Tribune no mention was made of the bombers' arrival while even in the NS&N they were only mentioned in two irritated one-sentence asides; 24/7/1948, p. 65, 31 7/1948, p. 86. Compare with The Daily Worker, 'THE BIG BERLIN BLUFF: American Troops Are To Take Over Air Bases in Britan', 17/7/1948, p. 1; 'GREAT PEACE RALLY SPEAKS FOR 3 MILLION', 18/7/1947, p. 1. See also H.C. Debates, Vol 454, cols 122-123 (28/7/1948); col 197 (30/7 1948); Vol. 456, cols. 110-110 (22 9 1948)
89. Samuel D. Berger to State Department, 27/5 1948. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1945-49, Box 5899, 841.00 5-2748.
- 90 Why Truman Won by Denis Healey (Labour Press Service, No. 1,280, December 1948).
- 91 Tribune, 5 11 1948, pp 1-2.
- 92 Tribune, 14 1/1949, pp 1-2.

- 93 H.C. Debates, Vol. 464, col. 2043, cols 2127-2130, (12/5/1949).
- 94 Tribune, 'Why I Disagree' by Ian Mikardo; 'Socialists and the Atlantic Pact' by Michael Foot, 20/5/1949, pp. 6-8
- 95 H.C. Debates, Vol. 446, col. 434-5 (22/1/1948) The most comprehensive presentation of Zilliacus' version of postwar events can be found in his book I Choose Peace (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1949)
96. Weiler, British Labour, p. 368n; Minute by P.F. Hancock, 1/7/1948. PRO, FO371/541, N7861.
- 97 Galman to State Department, 14/11/1947. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1945-49, Box 5902, 841.00B/11-1447.
- 98 H.C. Debates, Vol. 468, cols. 1475-6 (26/10/1949).
- 99 Schneer, Labour's Conscience, pp. 110-131.
100. Weiler, British Labour, pp. 119-123.
- 101 Labour, 'U.S. Labour Will Support Aid Plan', December 1947, pp. 105-107; 'U.S. Aid For Europe', January 1948, pp. 132-134.
102. See TUC file on 'Information (USIS)' at the TUC Archives, Modern Record Centre, Warwick University, Mss. 292, 973/50.
- 103 Cornelius J. Dwyer, 'Report of 46th Annual Labor Party Conference', 9/6/1947. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1945-49, Box, 5898, 841.00/6-947.
104. Weiler, British Labour, p. 320n.
105. H.C. Debates, Vol. 454, cols. 1327-1336 (28/7/1948).
106. Colin Cooke, The Life of Richard Stafford Cripps (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1957), pp. 375; Anthony Carew, 'The Anglo-American Council on Productivity (1948-52) The Ideological Roots of the Post-War Debate on Productivity in Britain', Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 26 (1991), p. 52-3.
- 107 Carew, 'The Anglo-American', *passim*; For the American production drive in Western Europe as a whole, see Anthony Carew, Labour Under the Marshall Plan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).
- 108 Walter F. Wanger, 'Donald Duck and Diplomacy', Public Opinion Quarterly Vol. 14, No. 3 (Fall 1950), pp. 446.

- 109 Paul Addison has argued that 'whether deep or shallow, the cultural influence of Hollywood was largely a matter of indifference to the Labour Government', which only 'blundered into' a confrontation with Hollywood because of concern over Britain's trade deficit with the United States Paul Addison, Now The War Is Over: A Social History of Britain, 1945-51 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985), p 133. There is an element of truth in this contention, in that the Government did not want to be seen as a 'kill-joy' of the main form of entertainment (of Labour voters) in austere days. However, both at Whitehall, and at Westminster, American cultural influence was never a matter of 'indifference', as seen in the hostility it provoked on all sides.
110. Memorandum by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, 15/6/1946. PRO, FO371/51726, A1281.
111. Sir J.H. Magohan to S. Holmes, 6/12/1946. PRO, FO371/51726, A3775; I.A.D Wilson-Young to W.H.L. Patterson, 18/12/1946. Ibid, AN3686. The weekly import quotas of Time and Newsweek remained 30,000 and 10,750 copies respectively.
112. Kuisel, Seducing the French, pp. 52-69.
113. Brigadier Ralph Rayner, a Tory MP, presumably hoping there was already a proper British response, asked following Castle if there was not 'a British product called Pepsi-cola?', H.C. Debates, Vol. 473, col 22 (27/3/1950), col 117 (3/4/1950). On the activities of the Coca-Cola company in Britain in the 1930s, see J C. Louis and Harvey Z. Yazijian, The Cola Wars (New York. Everest House, 1980), pp. 47-53; and in general, see Mark Pendergrast's entertaining For God, Country and Coca-Cola (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993)
- 114 See for example, H C Debates, Vol 418, col. 301 (4 2 1946), Vol. 434, col 1131 (11 3/1947), Vol 438, cols. 1788-89 (17 6/1947); Vol. 467, cols 1159 (19/7 1949); Vol. 468 cols 143-154 (27 9/1949)
- 115 Paul Swann, The Hollywood Feature Film in Postwar Britain (London Croom Helm, 1987), p. 36.

- 116 Ian Jarvie, 'British Trade Policy versus Hollywood, 1947-1948: "food before flicks"?', Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1986), pp. 19-41.
- 117 H.C. Debates, Vol 468, col. 737 (20/10/1949).
118. Maragret Dickinson and Sarah Street, Cinema and State: The Film Industry and the Government, 1927-84 (London: British Film Institute, 1985), pp. 211-219.
119. H.C. Debates, Vol. 460, col. 455 (21/1/1949); col. 1976 (4/2/1949).
120. Ian Britain, Fabianism and Culture: A study in British Socialism and the Arts, 1884-1918 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 223.
- 121 Steven Fielding, Peter Thompson and Nick Tiratsoo, 'England Arise!': The Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940s Britain (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), chapter 6.
122. Hennessy, Never Again, p. 120.
123. Swann, Hollywood, p. 15; p. 20.
124. The Listener, 12/7/1945, pp. 31-32. On the involvement of Keynes see F M. Leventhal, "'The Best for the Most": CEMA and State Sponsorship of the Arts in Wartime, 1939-1945', Twentieth Century British History, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1990), pp. 289-317.
125. Orwell, CEJL, Volume 3, p. 76.
126. Orwell, CEJL, Volume 4, p. 452.
127. NS&N, 28/12/1946, p. 475.
- 128 Vincent Brome, J.B. Priestley (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1988), p. 328
- 129 J.B. Priestley, 'More Cantankery', NS&N, 28 8/1948, p. 172.
130. Tribune, 'The Futility of Mr Priestley', 28/1/1949, pp. 1-2.
131. T.R. Fyvel, 'Realities Behind British Anti-Americanism: The Minority Leading the National Pastime', Commentary, Vol. 14 (December 1952), p. 561
- 132 NS&N, 28 8 1948, p. 172.
133. Colin Chambers, The Story of Unity Theatre (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989), pp. 61-68; 148-159.
134. The Daily Worker (New York), 19/10 1946; 21/10/1946. Gallacher had visited the United States as a young sailor but as a Communist he was not allowed

entry after 1936. During the war he got a pat on the back in a reception at the Soviet Embassy from John Jay Winant, a fellow Presbyterian, who promised he would arrange for him a visit. Without the help of Winant who had already left Grosvenor Square, Gallacher and his wife managed to get entry visas for a 1946 visit just before this became impossible for a Communist. See William Gallacher, The Last Memoirs of William Gallacher (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1966), pp. 289-301.

135. H.C. Debates, Vol. 467, col. 210 (12/7/1949); cols 438-40 (13/7/1949)

136. Tribune, 22/7/1949, p. 6.

137. Hennessy, Never Again, p. 249.

138. See Article 3 of the Treaty of Brussels, published in full in The Times, 18/3/1948, p. 3.

139. Minute by Christopher Warner, 15/4/1950. PRO, FO953/629, P101

140. Embassy to State Department, 'USIE Country Paper - Britain', prepared by Mallory Browne (Public Affairs Officer), 8/2/1950. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511.41/2-850.

141. H.C. Debates, Vol. 475, col. 7 (8/5/1950).

142. Embassy to State Department, 'USIE Country Paper - Britain', prepared by Mallory Browne (Public Affairs Officer), 8/2/1950. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511.41/2-850

143. Morgan, Labour in Power, pp. 379-388

144. Daily Mail, 'BRITAIN AS THE 49TH STATE', 3/8/1949, p. 4.

145. Sunday Pictorial, 21/8/1949, p. 1, p. 3.

146. Even Churchill, during the 1950 election campaign, said that he always thought 'we had a right to expect assistance from the United States', but 'the Socialist Government, boasting of all the benefits they have conferred, is living on the bounty of America'. See The Times, 20/2/1950, p. 8.

147. Tribune, 16/9/1949, pp. 7-8

148. Tribune, 22/7/1949, pp. 7-8

149. Tribune, 9/9/1949, p. 7; Tribune, 16/9/1949, pp. 1-2.

- 150 O.S.S /State Department intelligence and research reports, Washington D C., University Publications of America, Part X: Europe: 1950-1961 supplement, reel 10, OIR Report No. 5150, 'The British General Election', 9/1/1950.
- 151 *The Economist*, 21/1/1950, pp. 122-3; *The Observer*, 22/1/1950, p. 4
152. *The Times*, 20/2/1950, p. 6.
- 153 A group of *Keep Lefters* published a pamphlet which admitted that the proposals of Keep Left were made 'out-dated, or at least postponed' by the Marshall Plan and Russian behaviour. They even stressed that most of Western Europe had become 'more reactionary than "capitalist" America'; but still called for the Government to apply socialist principles and 'moral leadership' to British foreign policy. See Keeping Left Labour's First Five Years and the Problems Ahead by a Group of Members of Parliament (London: New Statesman, January 1950), p. 7; p. 18; p. 26. See also *NS&N*, 14/1/1950, pp. 27-8
- 154 The Socialist Road For Britain (London: Communist Party, December 1949), pp. 21-22.
155. H.G. Nicholas, The British General Election of 1950 (London: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 225.
156. Ibid, pp. 251-253; 325-327. See the election agenda the of the 'independents' in the pamphlet Crisis and Cure: The Socialist Way To Prosperity and Peace by D.N. Pritt, Leslie Solley, John Platts-Mills and Lester Hutchinson of the Labour Independent Group (London: Caledonian Press, 1950).
157. Henderson, The United States, pp. 44-46, Communist propaganda was treated by the non-Communist British Left with contempt, such as *Tribune's* following the Communist claims that American planes dropped Colorado beetles in order to ruin Eastern German crops See *Tribune*, 'Beetle Raid', 23/6/1950, p. 7.
- 158 Mass-Observation found in April 1950 that feelings about America had 'quietened down considerably over the past two years.' See Epstein, Britain, p. 49.
159. 'I wonder what sort of arguments I should get', Bevin asked in the House of Commons in March 1950, 'if the United States were in the Council of Europe and I was trying to put something over on their constitution.' See H C. Debates, Vol 473, col. 322 (28/3/1950)

160. Bullock, Bevin, pp. 681-2; 746-749, NS&N, 7/1/1950, p. 3; Keeping Left, p. 7.

161 European Unity appeared in an abridged form in Tribune, 'The Labour Party page ..', 16/6/1950, pp. 14-15. The 'Labour Party page' was an arrangement between Transport House and the hard-pressed financially Tribune, lasting from January 1949 until October 1950. See Jenkins, Bevanism, p. 65.

162. Tribune, 2/6/1950, pp. 3-4.

163. NS&N, 17/6/1950, p. 673.

164. Minute by M A. Hamilton, 20/5/1950. PRO, FO371/81646, AU10514/1.

Molly Hamilton, a journalist, author, and Labour member of the 1929-1931 House of Commons, served as Head of the American Division of the MOI and later Head of the American Information Section of the FO. She retired from the civil service in 1952 after 11 years in Whitehall, but continued to be involved in Anglo-American relations through her work for the E-SU. See Mary Agnes Hamilton, Up-Hill All The Way: A Third Cheer for Democracy (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953).

Chapter Four: “No Annihilation Without Representation”

No event in the first postwar decade had a greater impact on the destiny of the British Left in the 1950s than the Korean war. Though most opinion on the Left was united behind the Labour Government when the conflict began in June 1950, the Korean war became the trigger for the internal party strife which contributed to the election defeat of October 1951 and years in the opposition wilderness. The eventual focal point for the cleavage of Party opinion was the extensive rearmament programme which the Labour Government undertook in response to American pressure, and which threatened the attainment of socialist objectives at home. However, months before Aneurin Bevan's famous resignation in April 1951, all the latent suspicions of American influence and objections to American domination had already been rekindled under the impact of war casualties in the Far East and fears that the Americans might drag the world into an atomic nightmare. Public hostility towards the American allies, in particular on the British Left, became a great worry to those concerned above all with preserving the Atlantic alliance and the American commitment to Europe. The hostility of the British Left to the United States - the so-called 'anti-Americanism' of the Left - became a talking point on both sides of the Atlantic on a scale that it had never reached before. And the anti-anti-Americans in Whitehall, Grosvenor Square, and Transport House were determined to do all they could to combat this threat to the Atlantic alliance.

On the 25th of June 1950, North Korean forces invaded the South across the 38th parallel which had been dividing the peninsula since 1945.¹ The UN Security Council, which the Russians were boycotting at the time, immediately demanded the withdrawal of the North Koreans and when this was refused, member nations were called upon to give military assistance to South Korea. Within days, American forces were sent under the UN banner to fight in Korea. Britain's support for the American-led action was qualified by concern that it should not develop into war with Communist China. Bevin and Attlee were thus greatly dismayed when Truman announced, in the wake of the North Korean attack, that the Seventh Fleet would protect the nationalist forces of Chiang Kai Shek on the island of Formosa, thereby making a dangerous link between the status of China and the war in Korea.² By the end of July, however, the Labour Government had reluctantly committed British forces to fight in Korea as 'a valuable contribution to Anglo-American solidarity.'³ Such solidarity was needed to ensure the continued American commitment to Europe, which was still defenceless and in a state of panic lest Stalin use the Korean diversion to make a military move. At the same time the Government, in response to American pressure and promises of further aid, announced an increased defence programme which was to last three years and cost £3,600 million.⁴

All the Government's decisions at the time must be placed within the context of the fear of Soviet intentions and an outburst of domestic anti-Communist sentiment in Britain which has not as yet received proper attention from historians⁵ In the

atmosphere of Cold War fear and suspicion that the outbreak of hot war in the Far East brought to a new peak - fuelled by a popular press packing pages with stories of sabotage and spying - the public imagination became obsessed with the subversives of King Street and their criminal wire-pullers in the Kremlin.⁶ 'Let us arm ourselves against evil', Attlee told the nation in July 1950, when announcing the new defence programme on the BBC; linking the external and internal threats, he called upon the British public to be 'on your guard against the enemy within'.⁷ In Washington, where anti-Communism was always more pronounced, a former Labour attaché in the American Embassy in London was even busy compiling reports in the same month on the Keep Lefters Crossman, Foot, Mikardo and Driberg, claiming to foresee 'the remote possibility that Britain might be occupied by the Russians and that a collaborationist government might be formed from among the leaders of the left-wing group in the Labour Party.'⁸

At Westminster, however, there was almost unanimous approval of the UN action in Korea on the Labour backbenches. Only two Labour MPs, S.O. Davies and Emrys Hughes, expressed outright opposition to the act of 'American aggression' in the first Parliamentary debate on Korea⁹, though some others such as Tom Driberg admitted to 'many more misgivings' about American policy in the Far East.¹⁰ Some of them appeared in a wordy motion placed on the order paper in mid-July by Sydney Silverman and signed by 15 other Labour MPs.¹¹ A measure of the support which the most important segment of the Labour Left gave to the 'American action' in Korea could be read in Tribune, where Michael Foot deployed all his rhetorical ability to support the Government's interpretation of the UN actions as an act of 'collective security': a 'Labour Party principle since 1918',

Foot wrote, for which American soldiers were fighting and being killed in Korea.¹²

To defend the Korean war indeed meant to defend the American allies who were bearing the brunt of communist vilification; Communist attacks on American 'warmongering' and 'imperialism' were compared in Tribune to Nazi propaganda and the weekly warned of Communist attempts 'to exploit the considerable resentment at American wealth, power and influence ..in Europe and elsewhere.'¹³

Where nagging doubts existed about American policy in the Far East, they were by no means restricted to the Labour Left. Hardly anyone in Britain doubted the wisdom of Truman's Administration, but there were dangerous forces operating in American life that together with their corrupt Asian allies, Chiang Kai Shek in Formosa and Syngmann Rhee of South Korea, seemed determined to drag the United States and its allies into waging an all-out war on Asian communism. It could do nothing to calm British anxieties that the UN commander, General Douglas MacArthur, had openly associated himself with these views from early on in the campaign. His controversial dealings with Chiang and his outspokenness on foreign policy were viewed with disdain for both their content and style. The job of generals, it was believed in Britain, was to conduct military campaigns, not to challenge their own government. MacArthur became in Britain the prototype and symbol of the bellicose, anti-Communist, and 'out of step' American general, who threatened to drag the world into an atomic armageddon.¹⁴ While continuing to preach support for the war and faith in the basic sanity of American democracy, Tribune urged President Truman to remove 'the threat of MacArthurism - and, if possible, MacArthur himself ...'¹⁵

The new rearmament programme, however, was causing serious unrest in Tribune circles too.¹⁶ Discontent with the increases in the scale of Atlantic rearmament which the Korean War set in train was underpinned by the simple faith on the Left that the manufacture of arms in search of security, or worst of profits inevitably led to war.¹⁷ The methods of Soviet expansion, the Left-wingers had argued before the 1950 elections, were first and foremost social and economic. The correct way to defend the West was to raise standards of living, not to cripple Western economies with the expensive defence programmes that the United States seemed to be now imposing on its allies.¹⁸ If the first increase in the expenditure on British rearmament was grudgingly accepted by most Left-wingers, the agreement 'in principle' to rearm Western Germany that Dean Acheson forced out of Bevin in September 1950, convinced the alarmed Left-wingers that American pressure was leading Britain towards an inevitable confrontation with the Soviet Union.

The Left-wing alternative to this inevitable conflict was presented at the annual Party Conference at Margate in early October in the form of a long resolution moved by the *Keep Left* Harold Davies, expressing 'alarm at the increasing danger of war'. As it consisted of issues that would become such a regular feature of Labour Party conferences in the 1950s, it is worth taking a closer look at this resolution. Davies emphasized the importance of 'collective security' through the United Nations, but also wanted to avoid 'all' commitments contrary to the UN Charter (as the Communists and far-Left argued that NATO was). He urged the Government to support the 'outlawing' of the atom bomb (a previous Communist issue), international control of atomic energy, UN supervision of disarmament, measures to improve the 'economic and social conditions for the peoples in

backward countries', and the representation of the Chinese Communists at the Security Council. The first object of the resolution, however, was to urge the Government to call for an immediate Conference between the 'five powers' (despite the failure of previous conferences in the late 1940s). More specifically, the Government was called upon to renew 'its efforts to create friendly relations with the U.S.S.R.' And one of the ways Davies seemed to envisage achieving this, was by ending the (mostly American-imposed) restrictions on East-West trade. The Left's considerable enthusiasm for trading with the Communist countries was inherited from the Cobdenite notion that trade fostered international good-will; furthermore, such trade was seen as a partial solution to the dependence on the dollar, which Davies hoped would soon end too.¹⁹ Yet although Ian Mikardo pleaded with the delegates not to consider the 'details' of the proposals of Davies but their 'spirit and general intentions', the resolution which so sharply opposed much of British and American foreign policy, was heavily defeated as could have been expected after the usual display of authority in Ernest Bevin's last speech at a Labour Party Conference.²⁰

On the following day, the Manchester Guardian commented that the low level of support for the Davies resolution 'reflected the pacifist fringe, the anti-American fringe, the fellow-traveller fringe, that, however vocal and hysterical, carry few votes.'²¹ However, Richard Crossman seemed more accurate in an editorial in the NS&N, pointing out that the Conference was 'full of half-expressed misgivings' about foreign policy.²² The war in Korea and rearmament in Europe were exposing in the Labour Party resentment at the place of Britain between East and West, which Marshall aid had concealed but not eliminated. The young Labour MP Roy

Jenkins, who with his friends Anthony Crosland and one-time *Keep Left* Woodrow Wyatt planned (briefly) to rejoin the army as a gesture of support for the defence of the West²³, wrote in October to his Ministerial mentor Hugh Dalton (who represented at Westminster a 'conservative' Durham constituency): 'If you sat for a Birmingham seat I think you would be shocked to discover how many prominent people in the party are still emotionally violently pro-Russian and violently anti-American.' Jenkins believed these emotions were 'suppressed' at the present but would burst out in a 'period of political setback.'²⁴ Military setback in Korea came first, however, and all the pent-up feelings erupted

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In the middle of September MacArthur executed a brilliant landing from the sea behind enemy lines at Inchon, a move that completely transformed the character of the war. However, the swift military success raised the question of UN war aims. Bevin and Attlee were no less committed than the Americans, at first, to the policy of reuniting Korea by military means, followed by democratic elections. Despite the reservations of the British Chiefs of Staff and fears of Chinese intervention, Britain voted in the United Nations General Assembly in favour of the resolution which sent MacArthur's forces in early October beyond the 38th parallel.²⁵ But British opinion was soon disturbed by reports that the reactionary Rhee was being allowed to establish himself in the north, and that atrocities were being committed by South Korean troops under American eyes²⁶

The Government contemplated taking action over sensational reports of 'massacres carried out at American instructions' sent by the Daily Worker's correspondent Alan Winnington.²⁷ But proposed legislation to deal with 'subversive publications' was dropped; it seemed impossible to prosecute and be sure to secure a conviction because many 'statements of fact' in Winnington's report were true and, moreover, disturbing reports of South Korean atrocities had already appeared also in The Times and Daily Mirror.²⁸ Tom Hopkinson, the editor of Picture Post, was fired (on his own request) by the owner Edward Hulton after the latter refused to allow publication of an article by James Cameron about the atrocities.²⁹ When in early December the fired editor, a momentary martyr of the Left, was telling packed National Peace Council audiences that 'the American way of life encouraged a strong tendency to brutality'³⁰, it was clear that the alarm in Britain about the conduct and direction of the Korean war could no longer be attributed to Communist propaganda and evil machinations.

The war had already turned sour. As MacArthur pushed towards the Manchurian border, and Chinese 'volunteers' became involved in the fighting, the level of anxiety in Britain rose on a daily basis. In mid-November, a heavily-supported motion put down by Michael Foot called for an immediate agreement on a line which the UN forces should not pass.³¹ At the end of the month, after MacArthur's final drive towards the Yalu river, British fears became a Korean reality as Chinese armies in great numbers attacked the UN forces and threw them back in disarray.

A wave of panic swept the United States. And when some American politicians demanded that atomic bombs should be dropped on Manchuria, a corresponding

bout of panic was sure to be elicited in Britain. The most shocking moment of all came on the 30th, when news came that Truman had said at a press conference that the use of the atomic bomb in Korea was under active consideration. Prodded by a hundred of his backbenchers, and on the advice of senior Ministers, Attlee decided to force on Truman a meeting which he had been seeking for some time.³² When Attlee ended a two-day foreign affairs debate with a dramatic announcement of the visit to Washington, stormy applause erupted on both sides of the House.³³ His transatlantic flight boosted British morale, in particular in the Labour Party, where the idea that Attlee had saved the world from American belligerency by an intervention at a crucial moment, became part of the Labour Party mythology in the early 1950s.³⁴ In fact, Attlee's achievements in Washington were much more moderate. He did not fail to impress on Truman the need to confine the war to Korea, but the Anglo-American differences over the status of China, Formosa and the use of the atom bomb remained as great as they were.³⁵ The Administration was against concessions to Communist China and the mood in Congress, according to *Time*, was 'almost fatalistically ready... for an international showdown.'³⁶ Attlee himself, a fortnight after his return, thought the 'Americans were dangerously hysterical and sure that war was coming.'³⁷

All British efforts around the New Year were directed to making sure that World War Three did not come, a war that would spread from the Far East to Europe in which Britain would be an immediate target for Russian atomic bombs. The international situation was bleaker than ever. In Korea UN forces continued their rapid retreat while in the General Assembly, the Americans pressed vigorously for a resolution 'branding' China as aggressor and imposing sanctions on her. In

Britain, this was regarded as a disastrous gesture to placate the Republicans in Congress, which threatened to further spread the undeclared war with China. The Cabinet on the 25th of January 1991 decided at first not to support the American resolution. However, strong pressure was exerted by a small but influential group of Ministers, including Hugh Gaitskell and Herbert Morrison, who were worried about the consequences of an open rift on the American commitment to Europe. The original decision was reversed and Britain voted for a (toned-down) American resolution which deferred the imposition of sanctions until another UN effort was made to end the hostilities and achieve a negotiated settlement³⁸ The Government's desire to avoid 'a general war in the Far East' was clear to both the British and American people, Attlee wrote to Dalton, but 'we must not let our people be led away by crude anti-Americanism That would indeed be to play Moscow's game '³⁹

At the same time, the Government bowed to more American pressure and made another increase in the defence programme. While resisting the demands of American chiefs of staff for a programme costing £6,000 million, the Cabinet settled in late January for an increase to £4,700, a programme that soon proved to be beyond Britain's capability and a subject for controversy ever since.⁴⁰ But there is little argument that political considerations were paramount. In the United States there was still considerable opposition to the Administration's plans to send Eisenhower to defend Europe with additional American land forces. Truman had just announced a new and massive American defence programme and in order to ensure that he would brave the raucous chorus of isolationists and Asia-firsters, it was clear that the European countries would have to make a greater defence effort

too. Britain, in particular, had her usual point to make of showing the Americans that she was still a great world power, worthier than all the other European allies and prepared to make outstanding sacrifices to defend the West. On this level, at least, the rearmament programme was the most expensive publicity stunt in British history. But on the Left-wing of the Labour backbenches, the pressure from American defence-planners to proceed with the rearmament of Britain (or Germany) was already the source of great resentment. The 'Pentagon' was fast joining Wall Street and Big Business as a popular article of socialist demonology.⁴¹

By February 1951, American attitudes towards China and rearmament had finally ended the three-year honeymoon of the *Keep Lefters* with the Truman Administration. In Tribune, the 'foolhardy policies' of the 'erstwhile more progressive' Administration were now declared a no less grave threat to world peace than Soviet actions.⁴² But as long as there was some measure of 'British independence of the American line', Ian Mikardo explained, it was necessary to continue to support the Labour Government; for the Conservatives think that Britain should 'blindly' follow all American 'orders' and 'look upon it as an act of treachery to express even the mildest doubts about the wisdom of any American decision or about the political infallibility of any orating American general.'⁴³ Mikardo, Foot, Crossman and Castle published a letter in the Daily Herald which pledged support because of 'the invaluable part played by the Labour Government in restraining the dangerous tendencies of American policy.'⁴⁴ Other *Keep Lefters* disagreed, turning their energies to a "Peace Aims" group consisting of around forty MPs. Openly critical of their own Government's docility, fifteen members of the group adopted a motion put down by Emrys Hughes which regretted the

resolution to 'Brand China' and called for the withdrawal of all armed forces from Korea.⁴⁵ The gulf over Anglo-American relations between the Government and some of its Left-wing supporters was fully apparent in the debates in the House of Commons in mid-February on foreign and defence affairs. 'There is no way of uniting the Socialist Party', a Tory grandee sarcastically wrote, 'save perhaps for Mr. Attlee to declare war on the United States.'⁴⁶

iii

The emotions released in these months by the war in the Far East were no less marked, however, among the ardent advocates of the Atlantic alliance who formed a clear majority among opinion-makers in Britain. Such passionate pleas for Anglo-American understanding as were expressed in the winter of 1950-1951 had not been heard in Britain since the end of the Second World War. And no wonder. Across the Atlantic, isolationist and anti-British forces were on the move again: ex-President Hoover and Senator Taft called to limit the American involvement in the defence of Europe while the Chicago Tribune attacked the Atlanticism which enabled the White House to send 'American youths to die in Britain's wars.'⁴⁷ And in Britain, The Economist noted with worry, irritation with the United States was also 'very wide-spread...affecting circles that are normally staunchly pro-American.'⁴⁸ Yet despite the widespread belief that much of American policy in the Far East was reckless and wrong, nothing was more important in the opinion of the British Atlanticists than securing the 'Anglo-American understanding' so vital to the survival of Britain and the 'whole free world'.

Open expressions of hostility towards 'the Americans' were thus deplored as a dangerous encouragement to the anti-British forces in the United States, besides being an embarrassing manifestation of national, ideological, or cultural prejudice. 'Stop grouching at our US friends', called the veteran *News Chronicle* columnist, A.J. Cummings, assailing the 'good deal of loose anti-American talk' heard in Britain which was in most cases not 'informed criticism' of American policies in Korea but 'stupid, prejudiced and in many respects ignorant antagonism to all things American, to the American way of life, to its "sensationalism," even to its supposed belligerency'

This primitive mental attitude is doubtless due in part to a grievous vexation at the way things are going in Korea, in part to extravagant utterances of certain American politicians as irresponsible as some of our own boys of the bulldog breed.

It is due also, I think, to a feeling of envy at America's less vulnerable position, to an unwonted sense of inferiority, to a dislike (fostered by those who hate America for reasons that bode ill for our security) of being tied, or appearing to be tied, to America's apron strings in any circumstances whatever, particularly now.'⁴⁹

In this context, 'anti-Americanism' in Britain as a whole, and of the British Left in particular, became a talking-point in British political life as never before: the British Left, it was believed, posed the same threat to the Anglo-American alliance that the American Right had been presenting since 1941. Both were compared frequently in Atlanticist Liberal newspapers such as the *News Chronicle*, the *Observer*⁵⁰ and the *Manchester Guardian*, which fiercely denounced the Labour Left's 'search for an

American scapegoat', 'latent anti-Americanism (because Americans are not socialists)', and its 'sentimentalism about Communist Russia and China'.⁵¹

Tory newspapers and politicians, with the additional partisan desire to score a polemical point, were equally ready to condemn the 'fashion of left-wing circles to be anti-American.'⁵² In private interviews with American Embassy officials or American visitors, Conservative leaders such as Sir David Maxwell Fyfe played down the impact of 'real anti-American feeling' in the Labour Party as much as in their own Party.⁵³ But in public, for example in the foreign affairs debate on the 12th of February, 1951, Tory speakers such as the future Minister Nigel Birch blasted away at 'the anti-Americanism of so many hon. Gentlemen opposite and, as I believe, of so many Ministers.'⁵⁴

Such attacks were usually met with heated denials from the Labour benches. Sydney Silverman, always certain of a mention in this respect since he had remarked in 1947 that the Americans were 'shabby money-lenders'⁵⁵, protested that 'people in this House sometimes accuse me of being anti-American. I am nothing of the kind.'⁵⁶ Castigating a whole nation was contrary, of course to socialist doctrine, which divided the universe according to social and economic classes. Tom Driberg opened in January 1951 his Reynolds News column (headlined 'Yanks Are Our Problem') with a dire warning: 'A crude and extreme anti-Americanism can be as dangerous and as wrong as any other sweeping condemnation of a whole people - as wrong as anti-Semitism or ...anti-Sovietism.'

Americans, God knows, can be irritating enough, with their adolescent brashness, their obsession with machines and with slogans as substitutes for

human action and human thought, the r mania for Coca-cola and all that it symbolizes and for selling it all over the world

Americans, as millions of British people ought to be able to testify, can also be intensely lovable, and capable of quick generosity and of switching, with breath-taking volatility, from barbarous to humane policies and behaviour....⁵⁷

Left-wing critics of the United States were duly careful not to become associated with the blind hatred poured out by Communist propaganda; Tribune, for example, found it necessary in February to emphasize that the execution in Virginia of seven young blacks for raping a white women was 'deplorable', even though the Communists had exploited the case for 'their own anti-American campaign.'⁵⁸

The most uncompromising response on the Left to the accusation of 'anti-Americanism' can be seen in the protracted efforts of the editor of the NS&N editor Kingsley Martin to understand why he was so constantly accused of 'the strange new sin of anti-Americanism'.⁵⁹ Unlike Tribune, the NS&N at the outbreak of the Korean war gave the UN decision only reluctant support, warning that the North Koreans had given 'American Imperialism just the chance that it desired'⁶⁰ (Martin's insistence on personally writing this editorial himself, and with this 'temporising' tone, caused a major row with his assistant editor Richard Crossman.⁶¹) As the war progressed, the NS&N questioned the 'legality' of the UN decisions; opposed the crossing of the 38th parallel⁶²; expressed alarm that MacArthur seemed 'intent on turning the Korean into a world war'⁶³; denounced in violent terms the notion that British troops were 'expendable in MacArthur's private war'⁶⁴, and finally, when the Chinese became fully involved and the NS&N

nightmare of atom bombs dropping from the sky first on Manchuria and then on London, seemed close to being realized, thankfully applauded Attlee's 'realism and sanity' without whom 'the McCarthy-McArthurites would have won their way' ⁶⁵ 'Can we save America from herself?' ⁶⁶ it unselfishly asked but, of course, it mainly wanted to save Britain. How? The Chinese had shown the Americans that they would not all be treated as Asian 'Gooks', and the British, 'if we don't want to be treated as Gooks', should follow the Chinese example by challenging the 'Government's too ready acceptance of American domination.' ⁶⁷

The NS&N was now at the centre of opposition to the war with China, its socialist and pacifist traditions combined with the anti-imperialist concern for the 'awakening of Asia'. Many British socialists for whom it had been hard enough to give up on Soviet Communism, were unable to face a situation in which Britain was allied with American 'imperialism' against a previously-exploited country now calling itself socialist and free. G D H. Cole struck a ready echo in the hearts of many NS&N readers when he announced that 'if Great Britain gets dragged into war with China by the Americans, I shall be on the side of China' ⁶⁸ Deluged by a 'huge post-bag' of support, but also some of protest, the NS&N distanced itself publicly from Cole's wilder interpretations of the 'past history' of the Korean war, such as not seeing the North Korean attack in June as an act of 'aggression' that needed UN intervention. But it called for a focus on the future and the vigorous campaign to make it impossible for the Government to acquiesce in the imposition of sanctions on China that would lead to war. ⁶⁹ If only, Martin (and the rest the British Left in the next decade) argued with passion but with dubious authority, Communist China were admitted to the UN and Formosa returned to the mainland,

peace would immediately descend on the world. A Peace With China Council including many well-known Left-wing figures was founded by Martin to further these demands and was supported, he claimed, 'by thousands of ordinary, non-doctrinaire people who just think war in our time crazy and wicked'⁷⁰

Whatever the merit of these views, it could hardly be surprising that from the early stages of the Korean war, the NS&N and its editor were singled out for what Henry Luce's Time called its 'often-maddening muddle of Socialism, appeasement of Russia, and anti-Americanism' or the Observer summed up as 'excited anti-Americanism'.⁷¹ But from the first issue of 1951, Martin began to fight these charges tooth and nail. It was not 'deep anti-American prejudice', but anxiety of people who 'fear that their fate is being decided over their heads', Martin argued, which Americans detected in Britain and Europe.⁷² No one would suspect R.A. Butler of 'anti-Americanism' because he said that the British people wanted to feel they might help decide their own fate, Martin wrote; nor would they accuse of 'anti-Americanism' the Liberal Professor Arnold Toynbee, who suggested that the British slogan in the United States should be 'no annihilation without representation', a cold war parody of the Boston Tea Party rallying cry (which Martin re-quoted many times in these months).⁷³

After the American columnist Stewart Alsop complained on the BBC Home Service that 'a certain British left-wing magazine' encouraged readers to think 'that the American Government, and the American people, were hell bent for war'⁷⁴, Martin responded that he never suspected that 'ordinary' Americans wanted war, and a Gallup Poll showing that 58 per cent of the Americans favoured Communist China's admission to the UN had proved him right⁷⁵ At a Peace with

China meeting in Glasgow he declared: 'The one charge .. that is inevitably levelled at us is that we are anti-American.' Yet the '58 percent' Gallup Poll meant that 'when people say we are against America it means we are pro the majority of the people in America.'⁷⁶

Some Americans remained unconvinced. Richard Strout, a former NS&N correspondent, launched an attack in the American liberal weekly the New Republic on 'England's Chicago Tribune', which like its 'spiritual twin', the anti-British newspaper, 'sweeps the Atlantic with jaundiced glass.'⁷⁷ Long forgotten were those happy days, only four years earlier, when both weeklies were united behind Henry Wallace; Martin, angered by Strout's hints ('smear') that the NS&N followed 'the Party line' (meaning the Communist Party, of course), produced a lengthy and vexed response. He admitted that sometimes different shades of American opinion were perhaps glossed over too easily in the NS&N, but it found 'American fingers in every pie' largely because they were there. As a socialist weekly which had for years attacked British imperialism, the NS&N focused now on American policy because 'the centre of capital'st power' had now moved to Washington. 'When we think of the vitriolic floods of criticism that constantly poured over the heads of even the least imperialist Britishers who visited America a few years ago', he wrote, 'we stand astonished at the sensitivity of American liberals to British criticism of MacArthurism.' His faith, none the less, in progressive co-operation and in American idealism was not shattered: 'our enemy is MacArthurism and the Luce and Hearst press; the friends we seek are American liberals who are still liberals when liberalism has become unpopular '⁷⁸

Throughout 1951, Martin returned over and over again to the same subject, both in correspondence with his many American friends and in the pages of the NS&N. In private, he confessed that the general picture of the United States in his weekly was 'ill-balanced', but, he claimed, that was because 'no honest pieces appear in the rest of the press about America'.⁷⁹ In print, Martin continued to complain bitterly that 'those of us in Britain who love the fine traditions of America and complain when they are degraded' were 'being anathematised as anti-Americans' across the Atlantic, under the influence of the likes of the press baron Randolph Hearst, who 'did more than anyone else in America to inculcate the childish view that countries and individuals are either good or bad and to be judged by whether or not they are pro-American or anti-American.'⁸⁰ Thus the responsibility for the charge, in his opinion, was American sensitivity and their inability to accept foreign criticism; but it was a 'childish view' that Martin found increasingly in the British press too. Martin was thus pleased to see an outspoken 'piece of honesty' in the Manchester Guardian, on the way American generals regarded Britain as simply 'an American air strip', because the liberal newspaper had 'tended recently to denounce anyone who says anything that is both unkind and true about the U.S. as guilty of the strange new crime of "anti-Americanism" - which is somehow so much worse than anti-Britishism in America.'⁸¹

iv

Whether Martin was guilty of 'anti-Americanism' or not, disquiet about the Korean war was not confined to the NS&N, or indeed to the British Left. In

Whitehall, where discussions about 'anti-Americanism' were free of partisan polemics and journalistic warfare, FO information officers recognized from the first stages of the war that 'there is undoubtedly in this country, and far beyond "New Statesman" circles, a certain amount of latent anti-Americanism' and 'an uncomfortable feeling' that the British should not become 'hired mercenaries in MacArthur's war' (as the NS&N warned).⁸² Such expressions of hostility posed a double problem to the FO: firstly, it was feared that they might project across the Atlantic a negative image of Britain which would thus encourage the isolationist and anti-British forces; secondly, and of growing importance, they were signs of the public displeasure with a foreign and economic policy placing the United States as Britain's closest ally. Indeed, it is from the time of the Korean war that public hostility towards the United States - 'anti-Americanism' - became regarded by policy-makers in Britain as a threat to the Atlantic alliance, in the way that anti-British feelings across the Atlantic had been regarded since 1940-1.

Stepping up anti-anti-American plans to counter the prejudice and hostility which characterized some British attitudes towards the United States, or the Atlantic alliance, began to be seriously considered when the situation in Korea began to fast deteriorate in October-November 1950. A wave of Atlanticist fervour erupted which resembled the clamour for 'hands across the sea' activity occasioned by the creation of the World War Two alliance ten years earlier. The English-Speaking Union and other voluntary organizations set up a special joint-committee to arrange good American speakers for British audiences and only 'to a lesser extent' British speakers for the United States⁸³, a recognition of the need to concentrate most of the efforts to improve 'Anglo-American understanding' on the

British side of the Atlantic In Whitehall, the FO was bombarded with plans for action and offers of help. Despite the lack of official enthusiasm for some of the suggestions made by the Atlantic faithful⁸⁴ - not helped by disparaging reports from the Head of the American Department, Donald Maclean, who had handled these matters shortly before his defection⁸⁵ - it was generally agreed in the FO that something needed to be done to promote 'Anglo-American understanding' in Britain on the level of public opinion.

One of the plans hatched in Whitehall was to add the United States, due to public 'demand', to the countries of the Brussels Treaty which were already subjects for talks arranged by the Lectures Service of the COI. Herbert Morrison told the Cabinet's Information Services Committee which he chaired in February 1951, that the content of lectures on the United States was to be like that on the Western European countries - not 'about current American policy, but about American history, traditions and way of life' - only in this case, it was proposed that the USIS would pay for the lecturers. Morrison was worried, however, that 'in the present circumstances, official sponsorship of lectures about the United States would give rise to political criticism, especially if the lecturers were paid by the USIS.' As usual, it was necessary to find a way to improve public sympathy and understanding of the American allies and their 'way of life', without creating the impression that the Labour Government was further encouraging American political - and cultural - domination. Morrison suggested that the Government pay for the lectures and assume full responsibility. In a dissenting opinion which portended much to come about his public relationship with the American allies, Aneurin Bevan doubted the need for the lectures because there were many 'other

agencies', he argued, 'through which the British public were being sufficiently informed about the American way of life' Bevan claimed to be 'mainly concerned', of course, with what 'seemed to him a serious danger that elements who were anxious to promote anti-American feeling would exploit the lectures with this object.' The Committee, however, with Bevan the only dissenter, agreed that the lectures should go ahead, paid for by the British Government.⁸⁶ The COI later approached the American Embassy with the plan for a series of 500 talks 'on America by Americans that the British Government would pay for.'⁸⁷

The American information officers of the USIS and ECA mission, who had themselves been prodding Whitehall to do more to present the United States in a better light, offered, of course, their full co-operation to the plans thought up by the British anti-anti-Americans.⁸⁸ Britain had previously been a low priority in American global propaganda campaigns and the USIS in Britain operated 'on a basis of bare minimum needs' even after the increases of expenditure in 1947-48 following the creation of the Cominform.⁸⁹ The Korean war, however, precipitated an increase in Britain too in the activities of the American information services, with a new emphasis on the military alliance between both nations. The revised list of "Aims and Objectives" for the USIS in Britain which appeared in November 1950 stipulated a new set of priorities including the need 'to retain America's strongest and most reliable ally'; 'to combat the elements attempting to drive a wedge between the United States and Britain', and 'to counteract anti-American Communist propaganda.'⁹⁰

A detailed analysis of British public opinion carried out by the State Department in October found that the Labour Party was 'overwhelmingly pro-American'; and

even the 'Leftists' - though 'far less pro-American than the balance of the British population' - were 'by no means hopelessly lost as far as the United States is concerned.'⁹¹ The Labour movement, already the main battle-front with the Communists, was accordingly given top priority. An additional post was created for a Labour Information Officer (LIO) who would join the efforts of the Labour attachés and ECA information officer to counter the hostile attitudes in the Labour Party and trade unions.⁹² His tasks were to cultivate contacts with Labour leaders and distribute material to the Labour press and educational organizations in order to correct 'vague stereotypes about American social realities' and elucidate 'American policies and Anglo-American mutual interests.'⁹³

The American propagandists could count on all help possible from the anti-anti-Americans which the Cold War and Korean conflict produced in the Labour Party and trade unions. In a new edition of the speakers' handbook for 1951, the toilers of Transport House added a special anti-anti-American section, entitled 'The Atlantic Community', which was devoted to disproving the common depiction of the United States by 'Conservatives and Communists' as the 'citadel of Right Wing capitalism'; under Truman, it was maintained, the United States was nearly as 'progressive' as the British Commonwealth and Scandinavia.⁹⁴ The problem, however, was not only hostility among the rank and file to abstract capitalist images, but also to concrete American foreign policies. In December 1950, the Horsham Constituency Party submitted a long resolution which called among other things for a 'clear declaration' of British differences and agreements with the United States: mainly, of course, differences.⁹⁵ The international affairs sub-committee of the NEC headed by Dalton decided to circulate the Horsham

resolution among all the local parties with the refuting comments of the International Department; it was also agreed that more should be done, in particular in speeches, to explain foreign affairs to Party members.⁹⁶

Soon the LIO of the USIS, Patrick O'Sheel, could proudly report a 'remarkable' example of co-operation between the USIS and the Education sub-committee of the London Labour Party which was 'in the real political and ideological firing line against the CP, pacifist, and neutralist elements of the British left.'⁹⁷ In February 1951 the sub-committee held a special discussion on the 'widespread "anti-American" feeling' reported among the Party rank and file, arising from 'confused thought' and the socialist belief of 'many members' that as 'capitalism is the cause of war' and 'we are now associated with America which is the "citadel of capitalism", hence we are in danger of being "dragged" to war'. Hitherto all efforts had been to disabuse 'the members' minds about the "socialist alliance" with Russia'; however more was to be done now to explain to Party members the 'association of the free world.'⁹⁸ The USIS happily agreed to requests for USIS material explaining American foreign policy to help the Labour Party educators who arranged lectures, talks, and special conferences on international relations, with speakers such as Denis Healey, Christopher Mayhew, and the young Anthony Wedgwood Benn.⁹⁹

Probably the most remarkable example of the possible co-operation between the anti-anti-Americans in Grosvenor Square and the Labour Party was the special relationship of the ubiquitous LIO of the ECA mission, William Gausmann, and the group of 'revisionists' led by Rita Hinden and the Oxford economist Allan Flanders who launched in 1951 the think-tank Socialist Union to 'think out afresh the

meaning of socialism in the modern world'.¹⁰⁰ Gausmann was a founder member of Socialist Union, and even chaired its working group on Labour Party democracy; he also worked unofficially and wrote editorials for Socialist Commentary, the monthly which preached on a more regular basis the group's fervent Atlanticism.¹⁰¹

Back in November 1946, it will be recalled, Socialist Commentary had asked if the rebels of the Labour Left really had 'an anti-American bias'¹⁰²; by August 1950, the question mark had disappeared for good. Since the outbreak of the Korean war, the monthly had complemented its anti-Communism and support for NATO with efforts to dispel the 'anti-American attitude' handicapping 'clear thinking' and a social democratic understanding of the need for 'collective security'.¹⁰³ Like all holders of anti-anti-American opinion in the Labour Party, Socialist Commentary viewed with dismay 'the hysteria, the witch-hunting, the semi-fascist tendencies' and the 'hero-worship for men like MacArthur' which were 'such prominent features of American life.'¹⁰⁴ And it pulled no punches in denouncing the 'duplicity, myopia and arrogance' of American foreign policy.¹⁰⁵ Yet its unequivocal Atlanticism engendered the constant desire to 'counter-balance the one-sided opposition to all Americans and everything American which exists in the Labour Movement' and counteract the 'anti-American feeling, continually fanned by the open and covert pro-Russian pressure groups....'¹⁰⁶

v

Considerably adding to the anti-anti-American urgency in Whitehall, Washington, and Transport House was the intensification in early 1951 of

Communist propaganda which now combined attacks on American policies, personalities, morality and culture. The 'America Go Home' campaign was launched in Britain in March 1951 with a King Street pamphlet written by Derek Kartun, the foreign editor of the Daily Worker. After stating a warm socialist appreciation of 'the teeming, generous America of plain men and women who work for their living', Kartun assailed everything else the United States had on offer, including the levels of divorce, murder, rape and mental illness.

Go home, America! We don't want you here. We can get along in our quiet way without Coca-Cola, American admirals, and American G I s We want Britain for the British, not for the United States. We do not believe you are defending civil'sation. We do not believe you are defending democracy. ... We think you are hell-bent for profits, and hell-bent for war. Defence of human values? What miserable rubbish! Defence of freedom? What squalid hypocrisy from the butchers of Korea and the Negro-baiting rulers of the Southern States! We say get out! Take the bombers back where they came from. Stop rearming the Nazis. Tear up the Atlantic Pact - the instrument of war in Europe. We believe in an independent Britain, not a pawn to the United States We believe in a prosperous Britain, not a Britain ruined by crazy rearmament. . . So get out, America Take Eisenhower back to the Pentagon and the admirals back to the Navy Yard at Brooklyn Take your bankers and industrialists home to Detroit and New York And there, in good time, the American working class will know how to deal with them ¹⁰⁷

American Embassy officials were aware that the Communist Party had little, if any, public appeal or support¹⁰⁸, but the anti-anti-Americans were well aware too that many of the Communists presented in extreme and almost caricature form objections to American policies, and ideological prejudices about American life, that were held in much wider sections of the Left in Britain.

In the Labour Party, the Horsham resolution circulated in January which severely criticized American foreign policy had won by March 1951 the support of local parties in 63 constituencies (though only 21 of these had a Labour MP).¹⁰⁹ Other resolutions from local parties and trade union branches poured into the offices at Transport House in such great numbers, rising to 86 from the normal 12 a month in January 1951, that the international department began listing them on a regular basis.¹¹⁰ As this new thermometer for measuring the temperature of the rank and file conveyed, support for the admission of Communist China to the UN and opposition to German rearmament were the two issues responsible for most Party fever; and both were associated with American policies and pressure. The Labour Party official who gave this information 'in strictest confidence', told the American Labor attaché David Linebaugh that Party officials estimated 'that only a minority of the resolutions ..were directly inspired by Communists.'¹¹¹

It was therefore no surprise, the American Ambassador, Walter Gifford, informed Washington, that the Labour Government continued to be very worried by the extent 'to which critical attitude toward US prevails' among the Labour Party rank and file and that 'its efforts to counter this trend have thus far not had effective results.'¹¹² In May 1951, the Commonwealth Secretary Patrick Gordon Walker, a staunch Atlanticist, was appointed head of a newly-structured Cabinet

Information Committee.¹¹³ In June he drafted, with the help of Whitehall propagandists¹¹⁴, a paper expounding the need for a vigorous domestic propaganda campaign in order to dispel public 'uncertainty and confusion' that might 'prevent the carrying out of necessary national policies'. For the first time since before the war, Gordon Walker stipulated, there was 'danger of doubt and division' about the course of 'our foreign policy.'

The Communists are concentrating upon stirring up anti-American feeling and painting the United States as an imperialist, aggressive power that is anti-British, dragging Britain at its heels and ruining us by stock-piling. The Communists are helped by genuine waves of anti-American sentiment and, of course, by some of the unwise things done by America and by the many unwise things said by Americans. But this anti-American feeling, which we must expect to counter from time to time, has, I think, deeper causes; it is one of the ways in which public opinion expresses its doubts and confusions about economic events at home - the diversion of wealth to armaments, high prices, the deferment of the fruits of recovery and so forth.

Only by explaining 'the true nature of the Soviet regime and the real motives behind Soviet behaviour in international affairs', Gordon Walker argued, 'can we tackle the waves of anti-American feeling that hamper public acceptance of the consequences of rearmament.'¹¹⁵ Thus anti-anti-Americanism, as envisaged in Gordon Walker's paper, was really a form of anti-Communism, the only way to counter those 'genuine waves of anti-American sentiment' which were unfortunately to be expected 'from time to time' was to blacken the Soviet Union's

face, not paint the American one in better colours. The anti-anti-Americans in Whitehall and Washington also made of course efforts to improve public attitudes towards the American allies, yet the same emphasis on anti-Communism, rather than on anti-anti-Americanism as such, was apparent also when the paper was discussed in Cabinet in July ¹¹⁶ This consideration at Cabinet level of anti-anti-Americanism took place on the initiative of Hugh Gaitskell, who suggested that Gordon Walker's paper, intended at first only for circulation among Ministers, should be fully discussed in Cabinet ¹¹⁷

Gaitskell had already been for some time the most passionate anti-anti-American in the Labour Government. As the Labour Left was so readily associated with socialist 'intellectuals', it is worth noting that Gaitskell (like Gordon Walker and other younger anti-anti-Americans such as Healey, Jenkins, Crosland and Mayhew), came from a middle-class background, public school education and Oxford in the interwar years ¹¹⁸ Both Gaitskell and Gordon Walker entered politics after short academic careers and had held Left-wing views in the Red Decade, but had since become very anti-Communist. ¹¹⁹ A product of Winchester and New College, Oxford, Gaitskell taught political economy at University College London, before serving in Whitehall during World War Two. First elected MP in 1945, he rose rapidly under the patronage of Hugh Dalton, becoming the Chancellor of the Exchequer in October 1950.

Until the outbreak of the Korean war, as his biographer and friend Philip Williams points out, Gaitskell was adamant as any Left-winger that economic pressures from across the Atlantic should be resisted. ¹²⁰ But Korea shifted the centre of gravity in Anglo-American relations from the economic to military

sphere, and for Gaitskell, an uncompromising believer since the 1930s in the use of force to resist aggression, the question of Cold War loyalties, as he explained to Dalton, was simple: 'the Americans were, in the last resort, our friends and the Russians weren't.'¹²¹ His first trip of many to the United States, in October 1950, was an event which he had been planning for years, and the Americans, 'much better looking, especially the women'¹²², never disappointed him thereafter. A Minister who loved dancing, just told he was appointed the youngest Chancellor this century, could do much worse than celebrate the occasion until the early hours at a Greenwich Village cabaret (and better still, without the tail of worried-looking Treasury officials which had followed him around Broadway the evening before).¹²³

As Chancellor, Gaitskell pulled all his weight in the winter of 1951, whether with regard to China or rearmament, to ensure that nothing would harm the American commitment to the defence of Europe. The United States certainly needed to be 'restrained' as much as possible. However, great care had to be taken that nothing that the Government said or decided would upset American public opinion and encourage the American isolationists. Gaitskell made frantic efforts, even threatening to resign, in order to sway the Cabinet against the initial majority of opinion opposing American proposals in the UN into supporting the American resolution branding China as aggressor. As his conversations and diary at the time show, he was alarmed by the 'anti-Americanism' displayed in the Cabinet which in the case of War Minister John Strachey he regarded as 'pathological'.¹²⁴ Because of their prejudices, the 'anti-Americans' were blind to the gravity of the 'Russian

menace'. This reflected also Party opinion, Gaitskell admitted, but he was certain that the Labour Party would follow the right course if given the 'right lead' ¹²⁵

How hard it would be to give the 'right lead' to the Labour rank and file became apparent with almost every new development in international relations during the first half of 1951. Even an improvement in the military situation in Korea, and Truman's dismissal of MacArthur after something close to open insubordination by the General, were received only with cautious relief. ¹²⁶ Not wanting to play into the hands of the Republicans, who made much of MacArthur's dismissal and the General's accusations of British perfidy, the British Government was willing to accommodate itself to the Americans on a number of key issues in the Far East: to impose more economic sanctions on China, to announce that the status of Formosa should be settled only after the fighting in Korea was over, and to accept a controversial Japanese Peace Treaty. ¹²⁷ On the Labour Left, there was great dismay about this 'whole series of British concessions' to the Administration, whose own policies, under the pressure exerted by the Republicans, had become 'a gradual one-way drift' towards 'MacArthurism'. ¹²⁸ Much of the Labour Left's fury was still deflected, however, towards Churchill, who had insisted during a Commons debate on the imposition of sanctions that Britain should 'seek agreement with the Americans at all costs'. ¹²⁹ The Tories had not only constituted themselves 'as a straight pro-American party', accused Tribune, 'they have tended to throw the weight of their support on the side of the more reactionary American elements' ¹³⁰

The issue, however, which most urgently focused the Labour Left's anger with American foreign policy, and their own Labour Government, was Atlantic

rearmament. Shortages of raw-materials because of the American 'stock-piling' for their massive defence programme angered both the Labour backbenchers and Government Ministers such as Harold Wilson, the President of the Board of Trade.¹³¹ However, even greater resentment among the Government's left-wing supporters was caused by Britain's own defence programme. And when in April 1951, Hugh Gaitskell's 'rearmament budget' imposed charges on the Health Service of which Aneurin Bevan, the standard-bearer of the Labour Left in Cabinet, regarded himself as both creator and guardian-angel, Bevan resigned with Harold Wilson and John Freeman, a Junior Minister at the Ministry of Supply. Bevan's accusation in his resignation speech that the Labour Government had been 'dragged too far behind the wheels of American diplomacy', reported Walter Gifford, rekindled all the 'anti-Americanism endemic in some segments of Labor party....'¹³²

The Korean war had in less than a year rekindled all the hostility on the British Left towards the United States which the Marshall Plan had partly and temporarily allayed. This 'Anti-Americanism' of the Left became a widely-debated issue on both sides of the Atlantic. Yet alongside the ideological prejudices against the United States that augmented the attitudes of the Left to the Cold War in general, and the conflict in the Far East in particular, the Left expressed openly the partly hidden fears and mistrust of American power which were to be found in all British

quarters, irrespective of political persuasion. The wide range and intensity of popular hostility towards, or criticism of, American actions and motives occasioned in Britain by the Korean war was viewed as a serious problem in Whitehall and Washington. Anti-anti-American propaganda plans were launched at the British home audience, especially to Labour Party members and supporters, in order to counter Communist propaganda and to improve opinion about the American allies. But despite the efforts of the anti-anti-Americans, the relationship between the British Left and the United States continued to deteriorate and was about to enter a new and troublesome phase.

Notes and References

1. For the background to the events see Peter Lowe, The Origins of the Korean War (London: Longman, 1986). However, since the opening of the Korean war archives in Moscow new evidence has come to light exposing the role of Stalin in an invasion that was not his idea, but had his ultimate blessing. See Paul Lashmar, 'Stalin's "Hot" War', New Statesman, 2/2/1996, pp. 24-5
2. Peter Lowe, 'An Ally and a Recalcitrant General: Great Britain, Douglas MacArthur and the Korean War, 1950-1', English Historical Review, Vol. 105 (July 1990), p. 630
3. Morgan, Labour in Power, p. 423.
4. H C Debates, Vol. 478, cols. 959-966 (12 9/1950).
5. The outburst of anti-Communism in Britain during the Korean war is still waiting to receive more than partial and partisan treatment by historians. For an introduction to anti-Communist activity at Cabinet level during the Korean war, see Joan Mahoney, 'Civil Liberties in Britain During the Cold War: The Role of the Central Government', The American Journal of Legal History, Vol. 33, No

- 1 (January 1989), pp. 53-100. For a partisan Left-wing account, see Jon Halliday, 'Anti-Communism and the Korean War, 1950-1953', in Ralph Miliband, John Saville and Marcel Liebman (eds), The Socialist Register 1984 (London: Merlin Press, 1984), pp. 130-163. For an interesting aspect of anti-Communist culture in Britain during at the time, see Stephen Guy, "'High Treason" (1951). Britain's Cold War Fifth Column', Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1993), pp. 35-47.
6. See, for example, the serialisation of the book I Believed by the Communist convert to Catholicism, Douglas Hyde, in the Daily Express from the 19th of January, 1951.
7. The Times, 31/7/1950, p. 4. The Labour Party and TUC treated the calls of the Communist Party for 'working class unity' in opposition to the war with contempt. Arthur Deakin, Bevin's ruthless and anti-Communist successor at the Transport Workers Union, called upon the Government to ban the Communist Party and shut the Daily Worker. See The Times, 18/9/1950, p. 4; 19/9/1950, p. 4.
8. The former attaché, Cornelius Dwyer, who had closely followed British Labour affairs in the late 1940s when he was posted in Britain, asked for his comments to be recorded in his own security file, in case his 'association with these people were ever to be called into question' by the FBI. See report on recently declassified State Department documents in The Guardian, 11/4/1994, p. 24.
9. H.C. Debates, Vol. 477, cols. 545-558 (5/7/1950). The old Welsh miner S O Davies, holder of Keir Hardie's old seat in Merthyr Tydfil, was the Labour MP whose opposition to the war, and his violent hostility to the United States, resembled the most that of the Communists in the early 1950s. See Robert Griffiths, S O Davies - A Socialist Faith (Llansul: Dyfed, Gomer Press, 1983), chapter 8.
- 10 H C Debates, Vol. 477, col. 569 (5 7/1950). The main target for Driberg at this stage were not the Americans but the 'substantial number of back-bench Tories who, true to their jungle philosophy, cannot help baying their delight at the smell of blood in the air.' See 'Tories bay for war', Reynolds News, 2 7 1950, p. 4.

- 11 H C. Debates, Vol. 477, col. 2251 (19/7/1950) At the request of Attlee, Eight MPs withdrew their names. See Berrington, Backbench Opinion, p. 89.
12. Tribune, 28/7/1950, pp 3-4.
13. Tribune, 7/7/1950, pp. 3-4, 14/7/1950, p 7.
14. Epstein, Britain, p 215.
15. Tribune, 1/9/1950, p. 4.
16. See Jennie Lee in the debate on rearmament, H C. Debates, Vol. 478, cols. 1014-1016 (12/9/1950).
17. For the great passion on the issue of war profits among Labour and Liberals in the interwar years, see David G. Anderson, 'British Rearmament and the "Merchants of Death": The 1935-36 Royal Commission on the Manufacture of and Trade in Armaments', Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 29 (1994), pp. 5-37.
- 18 Keeping Left, pp. 21-2.
- 19 LPCR, 1950, p. 141. On the Left's attitude to East-West trade, see the NS&N, 19/3/1949, p. 265; 8/7/1950, pp. 32-33; 2/12/1950, p. 530. For background on the issue of East-West trade among policy-makers, see Frank M. Cain, 'Exporting the Cold War: British Responses to the USA's Establishment of COCOM, 1947-51', Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 29 (1994), pp. 501-522; Helen Leigh-Phippard, 'US Strategic Export Controls and Aid to Britain, 1949-58', Diplomacy & Statecraft, Vol. 6, No. 3 (November 1995), pp. 719-752.
- 20 LPCR, 1950, p 142; pp. 146-150.
21. Manchester Guardian, 6/10/1950, p 6.
- 22 NS&N, 7 10 1950, p. 338
23. Roy Jenkins, A Life At The Centre (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 87.
- 24 Jenkins to Dalton, 31/10/1950. Dalton papers, Part II, 9 10, fols 38-40.
- 25 Lowe, The Origins, pp 189-193.
- 26 Callum MacDonald, Korea The War Before Vietnam (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 61.

27. See the Daily Worker's front page throughout August 1950, and also I Saw The Truth in Korea Facts and photographs that will shock Britain by Alan Winnington (London. People's Press, 1950).
- 28 Cabinet conclusions, 20/11/1950 PRO, CAB128/18. A much debated report of atrocities by Louis Heren appeared in The Times, 5/10/1950, p. 5; See also Don Greenglass in the Daily Mirror, 7/11/1950, pp. 6-7. The idea of introducing new legislation arose in the first place because under the Law of Treason, the 'aid and comfort to the King's enemies' in Daily Worker headlines carried a mandatory death penalty and mass executions of Communist writers were obviously 'far too heavy a weapon to attack propaganda of this sort.' See Memorandum by the Attorney General Sir Hartley Shawcross, 'Communist Propaganda in Connection with the Korean Campaign', 2/11/1950 PRO, CAB129/43, C.P. (50) 259
29. Tom Hopkinson, Of This Our Time (London: Hutchinson, 1982), pp. 282-293.
30. Forward, 2/12/1950, p. 1.
31. Berrington, Backbench Opinion, p. 90.
32. Labour MPs to Attlee, 30/11/1950. Attlee papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Box 114, fols. 154-7; Dalton to Attlee, 30/11/1950. Dalton papers, Part II, 9/19, fol. 108; H.C. Debates, Vol. 481, col. 1440, (30/11/1950).
33. H.C. Debates, Vol. 481, col. 1440 (30/11/1950).
34. Daily Herald, 13/12/1950, p. 4, NS&N, 16/12 1950, p. 613; Tribune, 15/12/1950, p. 3.
- 35 MacDonal, Korea, pp. 76-77; Duke, US Defence Bases, pp. 64-68.
36. Time, 18/12/1950, p. 20.
37. Pimlott (ed) Dalton Political Diary, p. 495
- 38 Ibid, pp 503-504. For the text of the original and amended American resolutions, see H C. Debates, Vol. 483, cols. 1088-1089 (12 1951)
39. Attlee to Dalton, 27 1/1951 Dalton papers, Part II, 9/18, fol 15.
- 40 For the 'rearmament' argument, see Hennessy Never Again, pp. 404-418.
- 41 NS&N, 11 11 1950, pp 415-416.
42. Tribune, 9 2 1951, p. 3.
43. Tribune, 9 2 1951, p. 7.

- 44 Daily Herald, 10/2/1951, p. 2.
- 45 Schnee, Labour's Conscience, p. 201. The MPs who signed this letter included Sydney Silverman, Julius Silverman, Victor Yates and Wilfred Vernon
- 46 Richard Cockett (ed.), My Dear Max: The Letters of Brendan Bracken to Lord Beaverbrook, 1925-1958 (London: The Historians Press, 1990), p. 123
- 47 Chicago Tribune, 24/1/1951, part 1, p. 16
- 48 The Economist, 27/1/1951, p. 177.
- 49 News Chronicle, 29/12/1950, p. 2.
50. The Observer, 24/12/1950, p. 4.
- 51 Manchester Guardian, 1/1/1951, p. 4; 22/1/1951, p. 4.
52. Daily Telegraph, 21/12/50, p. 4.
- 53 See the memorandum of the conversation between an Embassy official and Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe on 4 January 1951, in Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1951, Vol. 4, p. 892.
- 54 H.C. Debates, Vol. 484; col. 132-133 (12/2/1951), col. 508, cols. 522-523 (14/2/1951).
- 55 H.C. Debates, Vol. 441, col. 1984-1988 (11/8/1947), Vol. 482, col. 1371 (14/12/1950); Vol. 484, col. 133 (12/2/1951)
- 56 H C. Debates, vol. 487, col. 2195 (10/5/1951); Cecil Poole, H C. Debates, Vol. 484, cols. 496-497 (12/2/1951); Maurice Orbach, Forward, 7/4/1951, p. 7.
57. Reynolds News, 14/1/1951, p. 4.
- 58 Tribune, 'The Martinsville Negroes', 9/2 1951, p. 9.
- 59 NS&N, 17/11/1951, p. 562.
- 60 NS&N, 1/7/1950, p. 1.
- 61 Martin to Crossman, 1/7/1950. Kingsley Martin papers, University of Sussex Library, Brighton, Box 11, file 3.
62. NS&N, 7/10/1950, p. 7; 14/10/1950, p. 349.
- 63 NS&N, 11/11/1950, p. 413.
- 64 NS&N, 25/11 1950, p. 494.
- 65 NS&N, 16/12 1950, p. 613.
- 66 NS&N, 23 12 1950, p. 641.
- 67 NS&N, 30/12 1950, p. 665.

- 68 NS&N, 3 2/1951, p 121.
- 69 NS&N, 10/2/1951, p. 147. 'In common with Mr. Nehru', the NS&N solemnly declared, 'we cannot agree that the United Nations were wrong in denouncing North Korea as an aggressor....'
- 70 NS&N, 17/2/1951, p. 177; 27/1 1951, pp. 98-99; Forward, 17/2/1951, p 1; 7/4/1951, p. 7; 22/9/51, p. 4.
- 71 Time, 4/9/1950, p. 54; The Observer, 7/1/1951, p. 4.
- 72 NS&N, 6/1/1951, p. 1.
- 73 NS&N, 10/2/1951, p. 150.
- 74 The Listener, 1/2/1951, p. 164.
- 75 NS&N, 10/2/19, p. 149
- 76 Forward, 17/2/51, p. 1.
- 77 New Republic, 5/3/1951, pp. 13-15; printed also in The Observer, 4/3/1951, p. 5.
- 78 NS&N, 10/3/1951, 10/3/1951, pp. 264-265. A short version was printed also in The Observer, 11/3/1951, p. 5.
79. Martin to F. Kuh, 11/7/1951. New Statesman papers, University of Sussex Library, Brighton, Topics, c 1948-1952, America, G-O.
- 80 NS&N, 25/8/1951, p. 197.
- 81 NS&N, 28/7/1951, p. 89.
- 82 Note by P.L. Carter, 11/8/1950. PRO, FO371/81668, AU1156/5.
- 83 F Darvall to D. Maclean, 27/11/1950. PRO, FO371/81647, AU10519/10.
- 84 Minute by Michael Wright, 14 11/1950. PRO, FO371/81647, AU10519 6.
- Minute by J.N O. Curle, 11/12 1950. PRO, FO371/81647, AU10519 10
- 85 Professor George Catlin (Shirley Williams' father), whose plan for an Anglo-American information 'institute' did not win the favour of the FO or of the American Embassy, never forgave those who sent Donald Maclean to discuss Anglo-American relations with him George Catlin, For God's Sake Go! An Autobiography (London: Colin Smythe, 1972), p 50 For the FO version of events, see PRO, FO371/81647; 90928.
- 86 Minutes of a 'Meeting of the Cabinet Information Services Committee', 12/2/1951. PRO, CAB134/460

87. George Moody to Mary Mahar, 17/8 1951. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511.41/8-2151.
- 88 The Americans pressed Whitehall in particular to give much greater publicity to Marshall aid and the way it had benefited Britain. See E.A. Berthoud to C. Warner, 10 8/1950. PRO, FO371/81668, AU1156/5.
89. W. Gifford to Department of State, 16/3/1951. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, NA511.41/3-1651.
- 90 Embassy to State Department, 'Country Paper - USIE in Great Britain', 3/11/1950. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511.41/1-350.
91. Report on 'British Attitudes on Selected National and International Issues', Department of State, External Research Staff, 31/10/1950, pp. 68-69. NA, RG 59, Decimal Files 1950-1954, Box 3507.
92. Embassy to State Department, 'Psychological Offensive', 31/10 1950. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511 41/10-3150.
93. Embassy to State Department, 'Functions of a Labor Information Officer, USIE London,' by Jack C. McDermott (Public Affairs Officer), 5/3/1951. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511.41/3-551.
94. Labour Party Research Department, Facts and Figures for Socialists, 1951 (London: Transport House, November 1950), pp. 386-388.
95. 'Memorandum by the International Sub-Committee of the NEC' [no date], in NEC Minutes Since 1900, card 401. Dalton (whose diaries record his own reservations about American 'recklessness' in these months) had also received reports, from Jim Callaghan and Anthony Crosland, about the displeasure among the Party rank and file with the terms of the Atlantic alliance and the behaviour of the American allies See Pimlott (ed.), Dalton Political Diary, p 495; p 503.
- 96 Meeting of International Sub-Committee, 16 1/1951, in NEC Minutes Since 1900, Card 400
- 97 Patrick O'Sheel to State Department, 25 7/1951. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511 41 7-2651.
- 98 Ibid.

- 99 London Labour Party Annual Report, 1951. London Labour Party Archives, Greater London Record Office, Acc 2417/A/33, The London News, 'Labour Looks at America', April 1951.
100. Stephen Haseler, The Gaitskellites: Revisionism in the Labour Party, 1951-64 (London: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 76-81. Socialist Union was officially launched on the 31st March 1951. For details and list of members, see Socialist Union Archive, Modern Records Centre, Warwick University, Mss 173, Box 12 In 1953, Socialist Union published a study of foreign policy which castigated the Socialist 'childish' misconceptions about the United States and the Third Force escapism of the Left-wing; See Socialist Union, Socialism and Foreign Policy (London: Book House, 1953), pp. 28-31; p. 56
101. Carew, Labour, p. 129. Carew stresses that although Gausmann was a former member of the National Executive of the Socialist Party of the United States, and obviously preferred to openly present himself in the left-wing press as a 'socialist', he was required ultimately, as a foreign service officer, to work within a policy framework over which he had no control. See *ibid*, p. 89.
102. Socialist Commentary, December 1946, pp. 502-503.
103. Socialist Commentary, August 1950, p. 181.
- 104 Socialist Commentary, January 1951, p. 2.
105. Socialist Commentary, March 1951, p. 56.
106. Socialist Commentary, November 1951, pp. 14-15; December 1951, p. 265; February 1951, p. 25, April 1951, p. 74.
107. America Go Home! by Derek Kartun (London Communist Party, March 1951). See also special issue on 'The American Threat to British Culture', Arena, Vol 2, No. 8 (June July 1951).
- 108 Patrick O'Sheel to State Department, 27/6/1951. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-1954, Box 3515, 741.001/6-2751.
109. 'Appendix to Analysis of Resolutions received March 8 - April 9', NEC minutes, Card 408
110. 'International Sub-Committee Analysis of Foreign Policy Resolution received January 16 to February 12, 1951', NEC Minutes, Card 405, 'Analysis of Local

Party Resolutions on Foreign Policy received April 4th to June 5th', NEC Minutes, card 412.

111. David Linebaugh to Department of State, 7/3/1951. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 3507, 741.00/3-751.
112. W. Gifford to D. Acheson, 11/5/1951. FRUS, 1951, Volume 4, p. 943
113. Note by the Secretary of the Cabinet, 18 5 1951. PRO, CAB129/45, C.P. (51) 136. A former lecturer and broadcaster, Gordon Walker had first entered Parliament in 1945, was closely associated with Herbert Morrison, and rose quickly to be appointed as Commonwealth Secretary in February 1950.
114. The Whitehall propagandists who Gordon Walker consulted were S C Leslie of the Economic Information Unit, Robert Fraser of the COI, and Christopher Warner and Pierson Dixon of the FO. See PRO, CAB127/316
115. 'Information Policy: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations', 26/6/1951. PRO, CAB129/46, C.P. (51) 179.
- 116 One suggestion in Cabinet was to counteract the 'tendency to under-estimate' the American military effort by publishing 'comparative figures' of the military effort of some Western Powers in 'relation to their national income.' Other suggestions were mainly concerned with ways to highlight the Soviet danger See Cabinet conclusions, 19/7/1951. PRO CAB128/20.
117. Gordon Walker to Attlee, 10/7/1951. PRO, CAB127/316.
- 118 Brian Harrison, 'Oxford and the Labour Movement', Twentieth Century British History, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1991), pp. 262.
- 119 Robert Pearce (ed), Patrick Gordon Walker: Political Diaries, 1932-1971 (London: The Historians Press, 1991), p. 7, Philip M Williams, Hugh Gaitskell A Political Biography (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), pp 61-62.
120. Williams, *Ibid*, p 164.
- 121 Pimlott (ed), Dalton Political Diary, p 501.
- 122 *Ibid*, p 557 Another Labour Minister who gained favourable impressions of the United States during a trip across the Atlantic in November 1950 was the Minister of Defence, and former Left-winger, Manny Shinwell. Washington was a beautiful city, the breakfasts were cheap, and even 'the American negro in Washington' had a higher standard of living than that of most Europeans See

Peter Slowe, Manny Shinwell. An Authorised Biography (London: Pluto Press, 1993), p. 255.

123 Williams, Hugh Gaitskell, p. 234

124. Pimlott (ed.), Dalton Political Diary, p. 50 . John Strachey's biographer believes that Gaitskell described the attitudes of Strachey as pathological because of the 'series' of anxious memoranda he wrote to Attlee and other Cabinet members in these months, urging them to dissociate Britain from American policies in the Far East See Michael Newman, John Strachey (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp. 123-124.

125. Philip Williams (ed.), The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell, 1945-1956 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983), pp 232-233.

126. H C. Debates, Vol. 486, col. 1025-1029 (11/4/1951) A Parliamentary Labour Party meeting began with a great cheer when the dismissal of MacArthur was announced. See Pimlott (ed.), Dalton Political Diary, p. 525. The new Foreign Secretary Herbert Morrison was happy to score easy points with his elated backbenchers by taking some credit for Truman's decision Yet aware that this was precisely what Truman's Republican enemies were claiming, he insisted that MPs should not 'crow' over the General's removal. David Linebaugh to State Department, 'Notes on a Conversation with James Callaghan', 13/4/1951. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-1954, Box 3507, 741.00/4-1351

127. MacDonald, Korea, pp. 109-11

128. Tribune, 15/6/1951, p. 3; NS&N, 26/5/1951, p. 583; 21/7/1951, p. 60.

129 See Churchill in H C. Debates, Vol. 487, col 2168 (10 5 1951)

130. Tribune, 18/5/1951, p. 1.

131 H C. Debates, Vol. 485, cols 1549-1615 (14/3/1951); cols 2572-2573 (22/3/1951); Vol. 487, cols. 228-229 (24/4 1951), Vol. 489 (cols. 1442-1522 (27/6/1951).

132 W. Gifford to the Secretary of State, 11/5 51 FRUS, 1951, Vol. 4, pp 942-943.

Part B: “Who Is Anti-American?”

Chapter Five: “America Riles Mr. Bevan”

Aneurin Bevan was the most colourful, charismatic and controversial personality in the Labour Party this century. In the early 1950s, before and especially after the 1951 elections which ended the Attlee years, he became the focus for a ‘mass-movement’ which mobilized the Left-wing of the Labour Party and occasioned a bitter internal Party feud. Because of his socialist prejudice against American capitalism and hostile criticism of American foreign policy, Bevan became the politician most identified in Britain with ‘anti-Americanism’, an identification he did not like, and which he constantly disputed. The Atlanticists of the Labour right-wing, however, believed that this so-called ‘anti-Americanism’ was an irresponsible attempt by Bevan and his supporters to take over the Party by appealing to the prejudices and emotions of the Party rank and file who were resentful at Britain’s dependence on the United States and alarmed by American Far Eastern policies. The dispute between Left- and Right-wings in the Labour Party, which had been brewing throughout 1952, came to a head finally at the stormy Morecambe conference in October. Thereafter Aneurin Bevan and the ‘anti-Americanism’ of the Bevanites became on both sides of the Atlantic one of the most talked-about topics concerning British politics and Anglo-American relations

Born in 1897 to a mining family in Tredegar in the South Wales coalfield, Aneurin Bevan started his working life as a collier helper at the age of 13 before emerging from the pit as a union official, local councillor, and from 1929 the Member of Parliament for Ebbw Vale. In Westminster, his personal charm and intellectual ability soon gained him recognition as one of Labour's most brilliant backbenchers, his militant socialism and explosive debating style the reputation of an uncompromising and rebellious left-winger.

It is hard to exaggerate the impact of the far-away 'America' on the intellectual and emotional development of the young Welsh miner. A voracious reader in adolescence, Bevan was deeply influenced by American Radical literature, by the political polemics of Eugene Debs and Daniel de Leon and the popular fiction of Jack London.¹ There was much to admire in American radical traditions; the 'Welsh-American' Thomas Jefferson was a personal hero and from the 'incomparable Abraham Lincoln' one could always draw an inspiring phrase or idea.² But like other Socialists of his generation, the dominant image imprinted on his mind was that of 'capitalist' America, a negative image derived from the bitter and violent labour relations of rapidly expanding industrial America at the turn of the century. Moreover, as his aesthetic tastes were cultivated to match those of his elitist middle-class friends on the Labour Left, his Socialist prejudices against American capitalism was given additional force by a deep cultural distaste for its mass-urban nature. In the works of the Uruguayan philosopher Jose Enrique Rodo - Michael Foot claims that he was second only to Marx as an intellectual influence

on Bevan - he found an expression of the typical intellectual emotion equating North American materialism with all that was wrong and ugly in the modern industrial world. Reading selected passages from Rodo, especially to American visitors, was a favourite pastime in the cultured Bevan household at Cliveden Place.³

In the poverty-ridden 1930s, 'Nye' Bevan was a bitter critic of the National Government's record on unemployment. Though not subscribing as others on the British Left to what he called the 'hero-worship' and 'ballyhoo' around President Roosevelt, American policies offered at least some sense of direction which was completely lacking at home.⁴ In the summer of 1934 Bevan had a chance to explore this for himself when he reluctantly set out on an American fund-raising lecture tour for an anti-Fascist cause. Bevan's biographers to date have not elaborated on his experiences, but these seem to have been considerable. He was even reported to have been standing in the crowd in Chicago when police opened fire and killed the famous outlaw and 'Public Enemy No. 1', John Dillinger.⁵ In San Francisco he witnessed the failure of the great general strike⁶, which must have confirmed everything he had learned about the American social system since reading Jack London's *Iron Heel* in the Tredegar workmen's library. As always, however, there was also the 'other' America, personified by the socialist 'martyr' Tom Mooney whom Bevan visited at San Quentin prison (where his life-sentence had been for the past twenty years a *cause célèbre* of the American Left). A year later, when Bevan's wife Jennie Lee visited Mooney, still in jail, the mention of the fiery Welshman's name brought 'a twinkle in his eye'.⁷ But unlike Jennie Lee and others on the Left who frequented the United States to support and report radical

causes, or to simply enjoy the spoils of the American lecture circuit, Bevan did not return to the United States for twenty-three years

There was enough to do at home. Fascism was looming and his fervent support for a Popular Front with the Communists got Bevan into trouble with the leaders of his own Party (which briefly expelled him in 1939). After the outbreak of the Second World war, he supported Labour's participation in Winston Churchill's Coalition Government, but nevertheless became, in Parliament and in Tribune which he edited in these years, one of the most outspoken critics of Allied policy. American foreign policy, he explained in socialist terms long before the war had ended, obeyed the 'outward thrust of American capitalism'; nothing was to be expected from any Washington Administration but 'a policy of American imperialism.' The postwar task of British Labour would be to make sure, he predicted, that Europe did not become a playground between the Soviet Union and 'American and British capitalism'.⁸

Yet when in 1946-47 the Labour Left was in open revolt over exactly that issue, Bevan's voice was absent from the debate. As Minister of Health, pre-occupied with creating the National Health Service and with domestic verbal warfare with the 'lower than vermin' Tories, Bevan was circumspect in public about matters outside his responsibility. In the privacy of Cabinet meetings, however, on more than one occasion he expressed deep misgivings about the integration of Britain's fortunes with those of American capitalism.⁹ Proud nationalism, no less than socialist ideology, was his driving force. Bevan deplored Britain's economic dependence on the United States. He never forgave the 'abrupt' termination of Lend Lease and the onerous terms of the American Loan.¹⁰ He

qualified even his thanks for the 'generous' Marshall Plan with a warning that Britain should not 'depend on the charity of any nation in the world.'¹¹

With the Anglo-American military alliance, on the other hand, Bevan seemed to be more at ease. Soviet behaviour since 1945 had turned him into a staunch Cold Warrior. He had little sympathy for Communists and their fellow travellers, hardly any more for the pacifists on the Left. In the summer of 1948, he even suggested breaking the Berlin blockade with a convoy of tanks, the sort of scenario that his friends on the British Left usually attributed in their nightmares to irresponsible American generals.¹²

Bevan began to distance himself from the general thrust of Anglo-American Cold War policy only after the Korean war precipitated an increase in rearmament which threatened to cut social expenditure. Until April 1951, when he resigned with Wilson and Freeman over Hugh Gaitskell's imposition of health charges, Bevan's main interests were domestic. Bevan (and Wilson), however, made it immediately clear that the dispute stretched beyond the immediate concern, important in itself, of health charges, to the much-wider issue of the Government's foreign and defence policy. They accepted the need for rearmament, but thought the scale was undesirable and, in any case, unattainable.

Rearmament, no doubt, was an issue which combined the frustration Bevan felt with the Government's lack of zeal for further 'socialist' measures and his personal rivalry with Hugh Gaitskell. Resentful at being over-looked for promotion himself, Bevan disparaged the young Chancellor's Labour pedigree and commitment to socialism. Principles, however, were involved no less than personalities. Bevan had argued in Cabinet since August 1950 that Britain should not follow a 'misjudged'

American policy which preferred expensive rearmament programmes to the improvement of social and economic conditions around the world.¹³ His reservations about the increase of the rearmament programme to £3,600 million over three years, and especially the need for more American aid inevitably accompanied by more detested dependence on the United States, became public knowledge in November 1950 after a Newsweek editor informed the State Department of reservations about rearmament Bevan had made in an after-dinner conversation.¹⁴

Bevan had to issue a humiliating statement supporting the programme¹⁵, but the worsening of the international situation meant even greater American rearmament programmes and even greater American pressure on her British allies to follow suit. The programme was increased again in January to £4,700 million and ironically, in his new position as Minister of Labour, Bevan again had to defend in public a programme in which he had little belief. All he could do was to bitterly warn Britain to be careful lest the increase in rearmament was accompanied with the same 'campaign of intolerance and hatred and witch-hunting' already seen in 'other places'.¹⁶ Two months later, in his ill-tempered resignation speech, the culprit was identified by name. It was the 'lurchings of the American economy', caused by the massive American rearmament programme, which precipitated world-wide inflation; it was American stock-piling of raw materials which was crippling British production. The Labour Government, he protested, had allowed itself to be 'dragged too far behind the wheels of American diplomacy.' Drawing on the mixture of socialist and patriotic pride which was such hard currency on the

Left, Bevan re-invoked the Third Force spirit which had been languishing in faded and dusty pamphlets:

This great nation has a message for the world which is distinct from that of America or that of the Soviet Union. Ever since 1945 we have been engaged in this country in the most remarkable piece of social reconstruction the world has ever seen.... There is only one hope for mankind, and that hope still remains in this little island. It is from here that we tell the world where to go and how to go there, but we must not follow behind the anarchy of American competitive capitalism which is unable to restrain itself at all....¹⁷

ii

‘America Gets It Straight’, Michael Foot wrote in Tribune, celebrating the speech which heralded the transformation of the Keep Left coterie into the ‘Bevanite’ mass-movement.¹⁸ A new lease of life and leadership was given to the Labour Left. Meetings of the old Keep Left rump of backbench dissidents, still led by Foot, Mikardo, Crossman, Driberg, Castle, and Bevan’s wife Jennie Lee, were boosted by Bevan’s magnetic, though irregular, attendance. New members were recruited, Harold Wilson became on rotation the group chairman later in the year. Plans were made to increase propaganda activities among the rank and file; the most spectacular of these was the Tribune ‘Brain Trust’ question sessions which sent the Bevanite MPs, as they now became known, to roam the constituencies on a well received socialist road-show.¹⁹ In July 1951, the Bevanites issued One Way

Only, a Tribune pamphlet which included an introduction by the three resigning ministers and called broadly for a cut in spending on rearmament and increase on expenditure on welfare. That the Bevanites could claim to have sold more than 100,000 copies of the pamphlet proved that the Bevanite protest had managed to tap a rich vein of support on the Left.²⁰

Over the next few years, 'Bevanism' became the most explosive issue in British political life. The many enemies of the Bevanites, in and outside the Labour Party, viewed all their activities as part of a shameless and organized bid for power. The Bevanites, however, were by their own admission more a bunch of independent-minded mavericks who enjoyed socializing together, loosely bound, as their (unofficial) name suggested, by personal loyalty to a leader who was often loathe to lead the group.²¹ Hardly constituting 'a party within a party' as their opponents accused, they claimed to be more 'a smoking room within a smoking room', in the words of Tom Driberg. Nevertheless their efforts at group organization, their high media profile, their outspoken style, and their success among the rank and file, provoked the wrath of the party establishment and the spite of a hostile Fleet Street press. It was 'a heady episode' in British and Labour Party politics, writes Ben Pimlott: 'The essence of Bevanism was outrage. the Bevanites were determined to shock.'²²

From the very beginning, nothing shocked British (and American) Atlantic opinion more than Bevanite attitudes to the United States and the Cold War. Bevan's virtual silence on Communism, the Observer remarked trying its hand at some political psychoanalysis, was due to a 'transference of stale anti-Tory feelings into fresh anti-American ones' which was 'a common transference among Left-

wing intellectuals.’²³ The Manchester Guardian, extremely hostile to Bevan because of the fears of the editor AP Wadsworth that it threatened the support for the Atlantic alliance among its own middle-class readership, missed no opportunity in the following few years to place ‘anti-Americanism’ high on the list of vices of ‘Mr Bevan and the hate-gospellers of his entourage’.²⁴ While admitting that many people, not only on the Left, were ‘acutely alarmed at the prospect of being “dragged at the heels of the Americans”’,²⁵ the Manchester Guardian commented that Bevan’s attack on the United States gave him ‘what all demagogues need - a scapegoat, and a foreign scapegoat at that.’²⁶

The Bevanites responded with what was by now the typical retort on the Left to such charges. After the Manchester Guardian printed an article by Alistair Cooke headlined ‘Chiefs of Staff Demand an Obedient Ally’, Michael Foot asked whether it will also be ‘smeared with the same charge of “anti-Americanism” which is now applied freely to anyone who dares question certain aspects of American policy?’²⁷ The ‘real authors of anti-Americanism’, Tribune declared, were those British newspapers which acted as ‘lap-dogs of the Anglo-American alliance’ by trying to cover a ‘critical spirit beneath a blanket of sycophancy.’²⁸

Open criticism of American foreign policy indeed seemed to be much of what Bevanism was all about. In One Way Only, the Bevanites went to pains to reject the ‘absurd belief’ of ‘some socialists’ that the United States was only capitalist and reactionary, and it expressed the usual socialist belief in the American progressive forces that ‘true friends of America’ could, and should, encourage²⁹ However, the rhetoric was much more inflated when it warned of the ‘wild anti-Communist crusade conducted by every means from witch-hunts to atom bombs’

preached to a yielding Administration by extreme elements on the American Right. 'How dare we deliver Truman and Acheson into the hands of the Republican wolves?' the pamphleteers asked in the type of journalistic imagery which was the Bevanite (or Michael Footish?) hall-mark.³⁰ The Kremlin fared no better in One Way Only, but the authors argued that Soviet strength and intentions were exaggerated, and that NATO countries must cut back the level of rearmament in order to stabilize prices and free resources for under-developed areas. The Atlantic alliance was accepted as one of those sorry facts of Cold War life, but Britain had to 'restrain the Americans' who wanted to extend the war in the Far East, bring Spain into NATO, and rearm Germany. The vital American bases on her territory gave Britain a special right, as well as a duty, to take a bolder part in shaping the strategy of the alliance.³¹

Nothing was new or outstanding in all this. That the Americans should be restrained, but diplomatically, was a widely-held belief in Britain. Where the Bevanites differed was in their refusal to burn incense to a postwar convention that the United States should not be criticized in public for fear of the effects this would have on American public opinion. The Bevanite belief was that it was useful to hector and threaten the Americans openly.³² It was their inclination to say openly what they thought about Anglo-American relations - emphasizing the need not to be 'mealy-mouthed' and to 'stand-up' to the Americans - that was responsible for their unmistakably isolationist tone.³³

Yet it was never more than a tone. Unlike the Communists, and the extreme Left-wingers and pacifists in the Labour Party, the Bevanites never called explicitly for a British withdrawal from NATO or even, at this stage, for the removal of

American bases. Neutralist as their emotions were, their intellectual convictions always remained grudgingly within the contours of the Atlantic alliance and Anglo-American co-operation. Offering no real alternative to the Atlantic alliance, Bevanism was limited to endless remonstrances at the grave economic damage and potential military danger that American Cold War policies - the anti-Communist crusade in the Far East, the pressure for British and German rearmament, and the attempts to restrict East-West trade by the Battle Act³⁴ - were inflicting on their allies. They argued long and hard especially against acceptance of American military aid which, even through NATO 'burden-sharing' schemes, placed Britain under the control of Congress and the Pentagon, and created 'a creeping decay and mortal surrender of British independence.'³⁵ Moreover, the fact that the United States was in the position to give financial aid to military obligations she demanded from others, Bevan still argued in 1954, was in itself evidence that her own share was too small.³⁶

To be sure, the Bevanites were all for American global involvement and foreign aid. They harked back to the Marshall Plan days, before the character of American foreign aid was transformed from economic relief to military rearmament³⁷ For who but the United States was rich enough to finance the grandiose Bevanite plans to advance underdeveloped areas? They wanted American aid, in short, but on Bevanite terms. Consider Harold Wilson's Tribune pamphlet In Place of Dollars First Wilson blamed American policies for nearly all of Britain's economic problems since 1945; then he made precise recommendations to the much-abused Americans as to exactly how they should pay for his various plans for world development.³⁸

One could easily gain the impression that the Bevanites would run Washington much better than they would govern Whitehall if elected in Britain. They knew how to lavish advice on the Americans on how to organize the affairs of the alliance and how to spend their money. But they seemed unable or unwilling to suggest a coherent and consistent British foreign policy, other than a warning that it should not follow or emulate current American practices. Thus Bevanism was more a protest at the Americans than a policy for the British. No doubt it reflected a socialist distaste for American capitalism and a radical mistrust of power. But Bevanism also mirrored widely-shared feelings of national pride and resentment which imbibed from patriotism as much as from socialism. Bevanite carping at American leadership of the Atlantic alliance and American mismanagement of global affairs is best viewed as a patriotic protest - albeit fortified by ideological prejudices and expressed in traditional rhetoric - by a proud and once powerful nation, which was forced by the Cold War to face the painful process of being dominated at home and displaced abroad by a stronger ally. That was the strength of Bevanism's popular appeal. that was how it captured headlines and hearts.

The Party Conference at Scarborough in the autumn of 1951, where the authors hoped One Way Only would set the agenda (like Keep Left in 1947), turned out to be a shortened election conference, only a few of the speeches made any reference to the United States. Even so, the party was in Bevanite turmoil. Bevanite misgivings about rearmament had already provoked the displeasure of the powerful Union bosses; a Tribune pamphlet which criticized the voting habits of trade union members on the NEC turned them into sworn enemies, especially Arthur Deakin of the Transport Workers³⁹ That Bevanites had topped the polls in the elections for

the CLP section on the NEC allowed the Tories to highlight the divisions in the Labour Party and their impact on the Atlantic alliance. There was an 'anti-American current', warned Churchill, 'flowing among the left-wing masses'; too much damage was done to Britain in American public opinion by the 'Bevan movement.'⁴⁰ Tribune, however, knew just as well how to drag the United States into the British elections. It printed an article by David C. Williams of the ADA - who had returned to the United States and was actually increasingly critical of Bevanism - in which he stated that 'whatever the Conservative press may say, there are millions of Americans who want Labour to stay in power.'⁴¹

Otherwise, Anglo-American relations hardly figured in an election campaign which was dominated by the Persian oil dispute and the rising cost of living.⁴² Despite the unfolding crisis at Abadan, Labour's 13,948,605 votes, one quarter of a million more than the Conservatives, was the highest ever obtained by any Party. The polling system, rather than the nation's verdict, was responsible for bringing Churchill back to power with a slim majority of 17. No one suspected that the Labour Party would spend more than a decade in the opposition wilderness. That it did so was in no small way the result of a protracted and bitter internal strife in which the United States played a conspicuous role.

iii

During Labour's first few months in opposition, the Bevanites were on the offensive. Churchill's admission that the scale of rearmament was unattainable vindicated their warnings. His demand for a British say on the use of atomic bases

on her territory legitimized, as Harold Wilson pointed out, an issue which had earlier caused the authors of One Way Only to be presented as 'unpatriotic'.⁴³

Churchill, however, had not become a Bevanite, as Richard Crossman suggested in his Sunday Pictorial column⁴⁴, least of all in his attitude towards Anglo-American relations. As concerned as any Bevanite about the sorry state into which 'poor England' had deteriorated in relation to the United States⁴⁵, but hoping to restore the 'special relationship' to its 'wartime' harmony, the Former Naval Person sailed in the New Year to Washington, where Crossman, who had followed him across the Atlantic, found most Americans believed peace was no more than a 'dirty word'.⁴⁶ In the conversations he held with the Administration on a wide range of issues, Churchill urged the Americans, though not as successfully as he had hoped, to alleviate the rearmament burden, give Britain more control over the American air-bases in East Anglia, and be cautious in the Far East.⁴⁷ However, a speech to Congress gave the impression in public, as Crossman told his readers, that unlike Attlee a year earlier, Churchill gave a 'green light' to the MacArthurites in Washington to open the war with China that they had desired for long.⁴⁸

To Crossman's surprise and delight, the Labour Party leadership decided to press a motion censuring Churchill for failing to 'give adequate expression' to the previous British policy of restraining the Americans in the Far East. It was an 'ill-judged attempt' by Attlee, opined The Spectator, to 'borrow...some of the mischievous anti-American bias of his backbenchers'.⁴⁹

The debate which Anthony Eden opened in early February showed that the term 'anti-American', while perhaps lacking intellectual rigour, had become one of the

favourite and most emotionally-charged partisan beating-sticks in British political discourse. Confronted by Crossman with a list of belligerent American statements, Eden accused him of 'anti-American prejudice' and trying to 'make bad blood between us and the Americans'.⁵⁰ In his diary, Crossman claimed that his sharp reply, that Eden had 'no right to call anybody anti-American for stating facts', brought him more cheers from his own side than ever in his life and a bigger press than any 'serious speech'.⁵¹ Other Bevanite speakers such as Jennie Lee and John Freeman also protested during the debate that they should not be accused of 'being traitors and anti-American' just because they were stating facts.⁵²

The Labour Front Bench was no less adamant that to be nasty to the Americans was not nice. Attlee declared that there was nothing he disliked more 'than the kind of stupid anti-Americanism' found in both parties.⁵³ Herbert Morrison had immediately after the election defeat already taken a leaf out of the Bevanite book, claiming that any 'anti-Americanism', which was indeed 'a very unpleasant thing', resulted from Churchill's implying that Britain was 'an inferior power ..on the way to becoming the 49th State'.⁵⁴ When the debate was resumed in late February, after being suspended by the King's death, Morrison warned again that Churchill's policy of agreement with the Americans 'at all costs', in which the British were treated as 'satellites of the United States', would 'stir up anti-Americanism' and play 'the Communist game'.⁵⁵

Churchill, however, shattered Morrison and the Labour Party by revealing that the late Government had secretly agreed in the previous Spring to air attacks, if necessary, on targets in China. And, of course, he had words to say about the 'anti-American elements in Parliament' responsible for this personal vote of censure.⁵⁶

Such allegation could not go unanswered by the next speaker, Aneurin Bevan. After lambasting the Prime Minister for improper use of Cabinet papers, Bevan derided him for thinking 'that an attack upon him might be construed as an attack upon the United States.' 'I have never had any anti-American feeling,' he assured his bemused listeners, 'I can tell hon. Members opposite that I have more friends in America than I have on the other side of the House.'⁵⁷

That he was entitled to criticize 'without being accused of anti-Americanism'⁵⁸ was an issue to which Bevan returned again and again in these months. In his much-awaited book In Place of Fear, a semi-autobiography and message for the times, he complained that it was almost impossible to express critical views of the policy of a foreign nation - he meant, of course, the United States - without being exposed 'to the charge of being anti that nation.' Then he proceeded to attack nearly every aspect of American postwar policy and the American Way of Life.⁵⁹ In his speeches to the socialist faithful, one could expect a brief warning that an 'anti-American mood' was wrong and dangerous⁶⁰, before he would breathe fire into a long list of complaints about Americans and American policies. 'I am not anti-American,' he cried at Jarrow in March, 'but I do not believe that the American nation has the experience, sagacity, or the self-restraint necessary for world leadership.' It was time for 'another voice' to be heard in the world, he declared, making the usual loose reference to the Third Force, other than the 'voice of America, dominated far too much by capitalists and financiers' and the voice of Russia 'poisoned by years of frustration.'⁶¹ Listeners could be forgiven for forgetting the opening statement.

The Jarrow speech, especially the sentence where Bevan told his 'American friends' that 'their economic and fiscal policies are doing more damage to western Europe than Stalin can ever do', was quoted in a debate on foreign aid in the American Congress.⁶² It generated angry comment from a wide international audience. Salvador de Madariaga, the eminent Spanish philosopher, accused Bevan of contributing to 'intellectual and moral chaos', an Australian Foreign Affairs Minister declared that Britain's domestic politics were not normally his country's affair, except when 'the world's most powerful opponent of Communism' was attacked in such a manner.⁶³

Yet when he lamented, as in Jarrow, the absence of 'national pride' in British dealings with America, Bevan was 'unfortunately' in tune, as his most passionate critics at home admitted, with a 'strong current of irritation' which 'for some years' had been 'flowing beneath the surface of British public life.'⁶⁴ A Gallup poll in May 1952 indeed showed that only 23 per cent believed that Britain should stick at all costs to her 'natural' American allies; 15 per cent thought that relations should be 'the same' as with other countries and a full 53 per cent thought that both nations 'should act together on most things' but that Britain should remain independent.⁶⁵ The State Department, which monitored the Labour Left with a cool-headed analysis often lacking among many commentators on both sides of the Atlantic, was in no doubt that 'anti-Americanism' was not 'a Bevanite monopoly' and was 'widely reflected in non-Communist and non-Bevanite British attitudes'.⁶⁶

In fact, as an expression of frustrated nationalism, Bevanism was not very different from the Beaverbrook Toryism propagated in the newspapers of the Express group, Bevan's mortal Fleet Street enemies. Anti-imperialist on every

other issue, Bevan could sound more Beaverbrookish than Bevanite when he spelt out at length American plans to cause the British Empire to disintegrate.⁶⁷ It gave the mischievous editors of the Daily Express no end of a joy to splash front page headlines such as 'BEVAN BACKS EMPIRE' in order to embarrass the Conservative Government whom they thought was not doing all they could for the Empire.⁶⁸ No wonder British Atlanticists often pointed out the Bevanite-Beaverbrook axis. They could not know how real this axis was: that at the request of his protégé Michael Foot, Beaverbrook secretly funded Tribune at a critical time in the summer of 1951. As his biographers suggest, the old schemer was simply unable to resist the temptation of sowing dissension and discord in the Labour Party.⁶⁹ Indeed, nowhere did the polemics of Tribune cause more anger than among its opponents in the Labour Party, and the persistent attacks on the United States in Tribune, or anywhere else were one of the main reasons for this vexation.

iv

'I still do not understand those who demand in one breath that we should be more independent of America and in the next that we should cut our defences', Hugh Gaitskell justified rearmament a few days after Bevan's Jarrow speech: 'For the weaker we are, the more we are bound to depend on America, and the less we count in world affairs.'⁷⁰ Labour right-wingers such as Gaitskell, no less than any Bevanite, were eager to safeguard Britain's independence of action in the international arena and were equally ready to argue the case for China's recognition or the expansion of East-West trade, the Left's main grievances with

American policy. However, unlike the Bevanites, they believed that Britain's independence depended wholly on the security which only the Atlantic alliance could ultimately give. Thus not surprisingly, they were haunted by fear of an American withdrawal from Europe, a dangerous probability which they thought Bevanite disregard for American sensitivities might encourage. 'Is this really what the anti-Americans want?', asked Socialist Commentary ⁷¹

Because Americans were 'sensitive to anything that was said about them abroad', explained the ex-Foreign Minister Kenneth Younger, Anglo-American relations were 'always a subject which it is a little difficult to handle in public at the same time with frankness and with tact.'⁷² The problem as the Labour Right-wingers saw it, however, was about more than international manners and diplomatic etiquette but extended into what they believed was the deliberate misrepresentation by the Bevanites of the realities of American life. In one of their endless arguments - this time about the nature of American "Government" - Gaitskell accused Richard Crossman over lunch, like Eden earlier in the Chamber, of unfairly blaming the Administration for unfortunate remarks made by irresponsible Americans. Gaitskell was 'determined to believe that there is a "good America", which he can side with' Crossman pitied this naivety in his diary, forgetting for a moment that the Bevanites were supposed to believe this too.⁷³

To the delight of the Conservatives, these quarrels often took place in public, uniting 'one section of the Labour Party' with the Tories, the NS&N complained, 'in denouncing "Bevanism" as anti-American heresy.'⁷⁴ The embarrassing spectacle of Labour backbenchers clashing over Anglo-American relations began immediately after the 1951 election defeat.⁷⁵ Alarmed by growing Bevanite

influence in the PLP, evidently better suited to opposition life than a leadership struggling with a foreign policy on which they had much to agree with the Government on the importance of the Anglo-American alliance, a coterie of young Labour right-wingers - including Woodrow Wyatt, Roy Jenkins, Anthony Crosland, Christopher Mayhew and Alfred Robens - gathered around Gaitskell with plans for a pamphlet that would answer the Bevanites.⁷⁶

Such a pamphlet was not produced; but a significant expression of the Labour Right-wing case appeared with the publication in May of the New Fabian Essays, edited by that ubiquitous Bevanite 'man of ideas' Richard Crossman, but regarded since as a harbinger of Gaitskellite revisionism.⁷⁷ Mainly concerned with domestic issues, the book included important contributions by Crosland and John Strachey, which cast a new and favourable eye on the performance of American capitalism.⁷⁸ The one essay on foreign affairs was a forceful rejection by Denis Healey of socialist 'utopianism' in foreign policy. Since he had written Cards on the Table in 1947, Healey had become the leading intellectual exponent of Ernest Bevin's Atlanticism.⁷⁹ Like Hugh Gaitskell, his outlook was strengthened by close friendships with American embassy attachés and ADA liberals, and, of course, frequent trips across the Atlantic which continued even when, for ex-Communists like himself, this was becoming increasingly hard.⁸⁰ In 1951 Healey left Transport House to launch his long career in Parliament, where he prided himself on his independence from the Gaitskell circle, but nevertheless was always a powerful advocate of Atlanticism. Only by a close relationship with the United States, he consistently argued, could Britain solve her own economic problems, fight poverty in Asia and Africa, prevent the Commonwealth from disintegrating and above all,

defend herself and Europe from present Communist dangers and potential German ones. 'Anglo-American unity', he reiterated the Cold War gospel in his Fabian Essay, 'is indeed a condition of Britain's survival'⁸¹

In the eyes of the Labour Right-wing, as for all of those of anti-anti-American opinion, this was the basic truth of the age. All the arguments about the wisdom of American foreign policy and motives at work in American life were all, in the last analysis, secondary to the need to be allied with the United States in order to counter the Soviet threat. That the Bevanites were unwilling to face up to this truth made the right-wingers all the more angry at their intellectual dishonesty and 'humbug'.⁸² The Bevanites, after all, made occasional references to the Third Force but never offered any real alternative alignment to NATO. Was this because they knew it was impossible? If so, claimed their critics, then their polemics were either irresponsible, or insincere, or both. Tosco Fyvel drew attention in a review for the New Republic to 'the striking absence in the New Fabian Essays of that mood of "anti-Americanism" which Aneurin Bevan has helped to associate in the American mind with the British Labour Party.' It was indeed no other than the Bevanite Richard Crossman, he pointed out, who wrote in his introduction that it was possible, unlike with the Russians, to influence and co-operate with the Americans as allies. Did the emphasis on Anglo-American co-operation, Fyvel asked, 'differ from Mr Crossman's bows to anti-American prejudice in the four-million circulation London Sunday Pictorial? It does. But then, that's politics.'⁸³

In the Labour Party these politics were increasingly bitter. In November 1951, 35 Labour MPs, including all the leading Bevanites, voted against the Japanese Peace Treaty (and the wishes of the Labour Front Bench).⁸⁴ Then, in a defence

debate in March 1952, they led the first major backbench revolt since the King's Debate in November 1946. The Labour Front Bench, provoked enough to show some spirit of Opposition but unable to oppose a rearmament programme which a Labour Government had begun, adopted a clumsy amendment which accepted the rearmament programme but not the ability of the Government to carry it out. But the Bevanites would not agree to the 'sham amendment' and called for the defence targets to be reduced, focusing their objections on the 300 million dollars of American aid allocated to Britain through NATO.⁸⁵ Despite being warned in advance, fifty-seven Bevanites, with others on the pacifist fringe of the Party, abstained on the Opposition amendment and voted against the Defence Estimates. Furious at this open show of defiance, Morrisonians in the Shadow Cabinet, Deakinites in the TUC and Gaitskellites in the PLP spurred the indecisive Attlee into a tougher than usual stance.⁸⁶ However, to the dismay of the belligerent Right-wing, a group of moderate ex-ministers persuaded the PLP to adopt a resolution which limited action to the reintroduction of standing orders, suspended since 1945, requiring members to abide by majority decisions on the threat of expulsion.

Right-wing rancour did not end there. In the following months Gordon Walker and others, incensed by the vigorous Bevanite activity which continued at both Westminster and in the constituencies, began, with the help of A.J. Cummings in the News Chronicle, to circulate the famous charge about the Bevanites being 'a party within a party'.⁸⁷ Bevan's charisma and oratory were credited, even by his opponents, with the advent of a militant mood among Labour supporters which was responsible for the considerable electoral success in local elections. But 'militancy for what?' asked Socialist Commentary. Bevan's pandering to the 'many

to whom anti-Americanism in any form and the demand for less rearmament and more welfare have an easy appeal' was viewed as nothing but a hollow and demagogic strategy in a bitter struggle for power.⁸⁸ Indeed, Bevan's call to 'stand up to the Americans', as Transport House surveys and Gallop polls showed, seemed popular both among the Party rank and file⁸⁹ and Labour voters as a whole.⁹⁰

There were those on the Labour Left, Hugh Gaitskell observed, who tried to exploit 'anti-American feelings' to turn the electorate 'either against the more responsible leaders of the Labour Party or against the Conservative Government.'⁹¹ This assertion was made in a thoughtful analysis of 'anti-Americanism in Britain' that Gaitskell wrote in the summer of 1952, and in which he strikingly failed to mention cultural aspects and treated 'anti-Americanism' solely as a political phenomenon. Gaitskell opened with the familiar argument that 'anti-American feelings' were 'fairly wide-spread' and were the result of the much closer relationship which the end of American isolationism brought; they resembled bitter arguments within a family. The main causes were 'poor relations' resentment at the power and wealth of the 'rich cousins' and fear, fuelled by statements of irresponsible generals and the activity of McCarthyite witch-hunters that American policies would drive Britain into a devastating war. These sentiments could be found no less, perhaps even more, among many Conservatives who keenly felt the wound to the national ego. However, 'anti-American feelings' were strongest at the present on the Left, with its identification of the United States with capitalism and reaction; its susceptibility to Communist propaganda, its lingering

sentimentality for Russia and new enthusiasm for Communist China; and its instinctive favour for the poor and weak over the rich and powerful.⁹²

v

As Hugh Gaitskell was well aware, the chief source of anxiety was still the American attitude towards the conflict in the Far East. Always threatening to develop into a full scale war with Communist China, the Korean war was entering its third year after claiming millions of lives. 'There is a great volume of opinion in this country that we should complete a withdrawal from Korea,' Emrys Hughes cried in Parliament, 'because the war there..[is]..one of the most cruel and futile wars in history'.⁹³ Unhappiness about the conduct of the war stretched far beyond the Labour Party pacifists. The harrowing effects of Napalm bombs, which had been stirring public opinion since March after an article in the Manchester Guardian, led to parliamentary protests from Right-wing Labour ex-Ministers such as Richard Stokes and true-blue Tories such as Brigadier Frank Medlicott.⁹⁴ A diocesan leaflet by the Archbishop of York condemning the use of Napalm even precipitated a Cabinet discussion. It was decided not to take the matter up with the Americans but a troubled Churchill himself later wrote to Washington about the matter.⁹⁵ And while the official British line remained praise for everything the Americans did in Korea, with numerous reminders that they had carried out most of the fighting and had suffered most of the casualties, a junior Defence Minister carefully emphasized in Parliament 'that the Napalm bomb has not been used by

United Kingdom forces in Korea,' thereby politely labelling it an American weapon⁹⁶

Because only American generals were conducting the armistice negotiations (opened already back in July 1951) on behalf of the UN, in itself a cause for much British resentment, the failure to make progress in those talks was linked in the British mind with an image of American belligerency, and the inflexibility caused by the domestic pressures of an American election year. Repeated incidents of mass shooting by American guards of rioting North Korean PoWs further reinforced the common British impression of the 'trigger-happy' Americans. Richard Crossman could write that 'even The Times now angrily admits that the Americans have grossly mismanaged the whole affair', thus covering himself with Britain's ultimate fig-leaf of respectability after new accusations that there was an 'anti-American bias' in his criticism of American policy in Korea.⁹⁷ The impasse created by the question of PoW repatriation managed to unite in Parliament the forces of Tom Driberg and Christopher Mayhew, a staunch Atlanticist who now led the parliamentary clamour, wishing 'our country had much more influence in the negotiations and in handling this prisoner question. It is a shame that we should appear to be called in only to clear up the mess.'⁹⁸

British resentment finally exploded in late June after a massive American air-raid on North Korea's electric power plants on the Yalu river. This sudden attack, at a delicate time in the armistice negotiations, was regarded on the Left as a 'catastrophe' and 'crime'.⁹⁹ The British Government, sharing the wide-spread public vexation over the American failure to consult their allies, made only a feeble defence of American policy. Churchill, significantly, stayed away from the first

debate and the Opposition delighted in his chagrin. 'We used to think of him as a bulldog sitting on the Union Jack,' Barbara Castle blasted 'He has become a lapdog sitting on the Stars and Stripes of America.'¹⁰⁰ The Labour Front Bench, however, was determined not to let the Bevanites change the official Party line from censuring the British Government for failing to secure consultation, to criticism of the Americans for their timing of the bombing. It was a battle over the support of the PLP between the Bevanites, Crossman observed, and no more than 30 MPs who supported Morrison and Gaitskell 'in their 100 per cent American line.'¹⁰¹ He did not think that over Anglo-American relations in the Far East, the differences in the Labour Party were so great; but as usual the Party gave a public showing of discord and disunity, the Bevanites attacking the pusillanimity of their Front Bench; Denis Healey wished that some Labour MPs would try 'to understand' the Americans with 'one tenth of the effort' that they made to understand the Chinese¹⁰²

'What are you babbling about?', Bevan angrily shouted at the Labour MP Freda Corbet during one of the Yalu debates after hearing her mutter something about his 'anti-American bias.' It was impossible to influence American policy, he protested yet again, 'if at no time in this House are we able to express criticism of what 's happening without being accused of anti-American propaganda '¹⁰³ It was a complaint always doomed to failure. No matter how much the Bevanites tried to distance themselves from the extreme Left and the Communists, much of their criticism of American conduct in Korea resembled Communist propaganda.

Bevan himself, for example, added to his criticism of the Yalu bombings a newly-gained awareness that the events surrounding the outbreak of the war were

far more 'obscure' than he had thought when as Cabinet Minister he had supported the war ¹⁰⁴ Until then, only discredited fellow-travellers such as D.N. Pritt had supported the Communist assaults on the validity of the 'UN-US' version of the origins of the war ¹⁰⁵ Yet despite their ridicule of King Street propaganda, Communist certainties often produced nagging doubts on the non-Communist Left too. These were strengthened, in this case, with the publication in June 1952 of The Hidden History of the Korean War by the American dissident journalist I.F. Stone, a conspiracy-theory which placed the blame for the outbreak of the Korean war on American activities and desires. ¹⁰⁶ His publisher in Britain, Kingsley Martin, who was earlier careful to maintain his distance from the likes of D.N. Pritt, was happy to add the efforts of 'Izzy' to the 'spearhead of anti-MacArthurism in this country.' ¹⁰⁷

Communist propaganda itself had by now moved on to greater things. Since February 1952 it had been fully pre-occupied with a world-wide drive to bring about the moral isolation of the United States by spreading stories about the use of germ warfare in Korea. For months all sorts of damning 'evidence' were the principal features in Communist press releases and radio broadcasts around the globe, the subject for Soviet and Chinese protests in the UN, and categorical American denials.

In Britain, any support for Communist allegations was treated as near-treason though not near enough for the Attorney General to decide to prosecute Jack Gaster - a British lawyer and member of a Communist Front commission which visited Korea - for publishing a short report accusing American and UN forces of 'crime on an unparalleled scale, devastation, cruelty, death' and, of course, wide-

spread use of germ warfare¹⁰⁸. On the non-Communist Left, such accounts were treated with suspicion. S O Davies was the only Labour MP who followed the Communist line in angry exchanges on the backbenches.¹⁰⁹ Even Emrys Hughes, who found in Peking that Chinese evidence was 'impressive', limited himself - so as not to be accused of 'propaganda against my own country' - to feverish calls for a total ban on the development of bacteriological warfare in Britain and the United States.¹¹⁰ The Bevanites, on the whole, treated germ-warfare stories with the incredulity reserved for all atrocity stories - including those they claimed were expounded by the American side too.¹¹¹ In Tribune, communist claims hardly merited a mention: this was more a NS&N and Kingsley Martin type of story.

Kingsley Martin, who indeed suggested that there might be a 'case for investigation', was rebuked by the Washington Post for displaying 'the degradation of a fellow travelling mind.'¹¹² But Martin, still incensed by any suggestion that his weekly was guilty of 'anti-Americanism'¹¹³, was soon outdone, in any case, by the real thing: the most scandalous fellow-traveller of the age, the Dean of Canterbury Hewlett Johnson.¹¹⁴ In July 1952, the 'Red Dean' returned from the Far East with tales of Chinese children searching the fields in the r thousands for infected insects, popping them into bottles with a pair of chopsticks.¹¹⁵ The response was a mixture of ridicule and fury. Angry Tory MPs, Lords Temporal and Spiritual: all demanded his removal from high office.¹¹⁶ The Government decided, however, that to try such action would only attract to him more attention.¹¹⁷ In the NS&N, Kingsley Martin lamented that the vain and naive Dean, 'a born actor', had 'laughed out of court' any useful discussion of 'the horrifying fact' that both East and West were researching biological warfare.¹¹⁸ Later in the year, after not being convinced even

by a report by a 'scientific committee' including the more respectable sinologist and scientist Dr. Joseph Needham, Martin closed the affair by suggesting in his diary that perhaps - in private he said he was inclined to believe so - a small experiment did take place and was snowballed by Communist propaganda.¹¹⁹ After all, was it possible that so much Communist smoke was blowing about without an American fire, even if a small and experimental American fire?

Echoes of the germ campaign were heard even at the TUC conference at Margate where a small majority (3,797,000 to 3,538,000) passed a resolution opposing the use of bacteriological weapons and urging a new international agreement prohibiting their use, this despite Arthur Deakin's attempts as President to suppress it.¹²⁰ However, it was regarded as a confused, rather than a sinister, end to a day in which two communist-inspired resolutions opposing TUC support for the rearmament programme, and an amendment of the Shop Workers union (USDAW) which supported in Bevanite fashion a defence programme on an unspecified lower scale, were crushed by large majorities.¹²¹ The Manchester Guardian congratulated the 'firm stand' of the TUC leadership, writing that even though Bevan 'frequently expresses his dislike of Communism...there is much in "Bevanism" that suits Communist expediency....'¹²²

Time after time this proved to be an inevitable association which the Bevanites never managed to escape. Nothing seemed to suit Communist expediency more than a split between the Americans and their European Allies. The 'America Go Home' campaign of the British Communist Party never resulted in anything like the massive and violent Ridgeway Riots that swept Paris in May 1952 and threatened the political stability of France¹²³ But the voice of the British Communists,

together with the world-wide propaganda of the Cominform, was venomous enough to make any signs of hostility to Americans and American policies unrespectable. And despite the fact that the Bevanites were very anti-Communist, some of this naturally rubbed off on to them. It did not help that the Communists themselves attacked Bevanism as 'fake-left' and accused them of 'clutching at the coat tails of Uncle Sam.'¹²⁴ One of the main Bevanite themes - national pride and independence from Washington - and the tone of their argument, sounded too close to the voice of Communist propaganda. The Communist aim was to drive a wedge between Britain and the United States, explained Lord Vansittart, who had become one of Britain's most vociferous anti-Communists, and the Bevanites, 'too dense to calculate the price of lunacy', he claimed, were helping them to do just that.¹²⁵ In the United States, the New Republic, not to mention the Right-wing press, complained that

The Bevanite left-wing of the British Labour Party sees so red on the subject of US domination of Atlantic policy that articles in the *Tribune* and the *New Statesman* contain echoes of the authentically Red *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. And at times Aneurin Bevan seems so much to be seeing eye to eye with Joseph Stalin on US machinations that the Bevanite line can be misused as grist for the Soviet anti-American propaganda mill.'¹²⁶

vi

Bevanite attitudes towards the United States were at the centre of events at the annual Labour Party Conference at Morecambe, one of the most stormy affairs in

Labour Party history Morecambe, according to Michael Foot, was 'rowdy, convulsive, vulgar, splenetic; threatening at moments to collapse into an irretrievable brawl.'¹²⁷ The conference was ruled by the atmosphere of intolerance and enmity which had dominated Labour Party politics for the past year. There was no doubt of the Bevanite fervour of the thousand or so constituency activists who packed the hall, nor of the wild anger of Right-wing speakers who were unceremoniously greeted with boos and jeers; the leader of the miners, Sir Will Lawther, became so incensed that he shouted at one point to delegates to 'Shut your gob'.¹²⁸ The gulf between the leadership and the rank and file zealots became fully evident in the voting for the seven constituency places on the NEC. Bevan topped the list again, increasing his votes by 100,000, while Castle, Driberg and Mikardo also enhanced their positions. What was more, the veterans Herbert Morrison and Hugh Dalton lost their seats to Harold Wilson and Richard Crossman. Bevanites now occupied six of the seven constituency seats on the NEC.

The impact of Bevanism was marked also in the debates themselves. Motions were passed reaffirming the principle of a free Health Service and instructing the NEC to prepare a list of key industries to be nationalized. A motion calling to review the scale of the rearmament programme was lost only by 3,644,000 to 2,288,000, showing that the level of support for Bevanite ideas among some big Left-wing unions was considerable.¹²⁹ On foreign affairs, the conference adopted an interim report published in June - Labour's Foreign Policy - which stated that 'close co-operation with the United States' was vital for Britain and the Commonwealth, and pledged the Labour Party to the development of NATO.

However, the Executive also accepted, half-heartedly, a composite motion (seconded by Crossman) which declared in Third Force sentiment that the Labour Party 'can best serve the cause of peace' by sticking to 'socialist principles' and refusing 'to subordinate them to American, Russian or any other pressures.' Furthermore, by stressing the need to expand East-West trade and resist the use of 'military weapons' to enforce territorial change in Eastern Europe, the resolution made it clear that it was directed in particular at refusing to subordinate to the campaign of what the mover called 'the right wing of American Toryism'.¹³⁰

Yet again, the image of the United States was dragged at Morecambe into the centre of conflict between the warring factions on the Party's Left and Right. On the first day, Bevan himself delivered a speech (on unemployment) which signalled a week of petulant attacks on the American allies. 'America', he carped, 'is haggard by two fears, fear of war and fear of unemployment which is fear of peace.'¹³¹ Bevan was not the only one who had commented on the connection between the American defence programme and American prosperity, Tribune was quick to point out.¹³² But it was his choice of rhetoric and hostile tone which stood out: Americans, Bevan suggested in short, were afraid all the time. The door was now wide open for a torrent of abuse from the smaller fry which dominated the conference proceedings. One delegate declared that the 'leaders of American imperialism' were 'the most powerful force for evil in the world today'; others sounded as though they quoted Communist literature directly, when they professed that '60 monopolistic families' or 'eight corporations' controlling the United States were responsible for every reactionary measure on the national and international scene.¹³³

Such hostility became the main-talking point on both sides of the Atlantic. The general tendency in the United States, the British Embassy in Washington reported to the FO, was to regard Bevan 'as a "bogeyman" and to emphasize his anti-American statements and ignore others that modify his attitude.'¹³⁴ In Britain, too, Bevan's remarks on the United States were the focus of attention. 'America Riles Mr Bevan', wrote The Economist in its headline, commenting that the old socialist prejudices of the Bevanites and their followers were nowhere more noticeable than in their attitudes towards the United States.¹³⁵ The Manchester Guardian opined as usual that 'Bevanism' was 'xenophobic, particularly anti-American....'¹³⁶ Even the Daily Mirror's John Walters, notorious for his sensational coverage of the American scene, wrote from across the Atlantic that he wished the Bevanites were not so 'IGNORANTLY critical of the United States.'¹³⁷

The anti-anti-Americans in the Labour Party needed no encouragement from Fleet Street. Already Herbert Morrison, winding up the domestic debate at the conference on the day following Bevan's speech and his own personal humiliation by the voters, said he was 'a little tired' of those who profess to believe in international co-operation but pick out particular countries 'for dislike and antagonism.' Pityingly dismissing the idea that all Americans were reactionary, he reminded his audience of the generous and progressive nature of the United States. of the Marshall Plan and the TVA ¹³⁸

Other right-wing speakers were much more vehement and direct. American help was essential to solve the problems of underdeveloped countries, Hugh Gaitskell stipulated, but it was 'not much good blacking a man's eye and then asking him for a large subscription ...'¹³⁹ Patrick Gordon Walker rued the 'hatred and envy'

implicit in Bevan's phrases¹⁴⁰ James Callaghan, employing an argument heard many times during and after the conference, accused the six leading Bevanites of 'intellectual hypocrisy' in believing that co-operation with the United States and NATO were vital, but unwilling to say so to their much more radical followers.¹⁴¹ The most furious and personal attack on Bevan was made by Denis Healey. If Bevan really wanted friendship with America as he said he did, then the only difference between him and the Party leadership, Healey declared, was that 'Nye thinks that the best way to win friends and influence people is to kick them in the teeth....'

But there is in the country and in the Party a great deal of real anti-Americanism and in my view it is a disgrace to Socialism and a menace to peace. A lot of it is just jingoism with an inferiority complex, trying to make foreigners a scapegoat for everything that goes wrong in this country. We are Socialists; we are supposed to believe ...in the brotherhood of man, and we cannot say all men are brothers except Americans.¹⁴²

Healey's angry denunciations of the 'stale mythology of these political Peter Pans' did not end when the conference was over. He wrote an article in Forward on the 'anti-Americanism' of the 'phoney Left' which he compared to anti-Semitism 'in both origin and function': a comparison often made in these and future years.¹⁴³ He was even allowed, in the spirit of open discussion with which the Left liked to animate their polemics, to carry the anti-anti-American attack into the enemy heartland the pages of Tribune. The weekly, Healey wrote, which at one time risked great unpopularity by insisting, despite the prejudices of the

Movement, that 'Communist Russia is the deadly enemy of democratic socialism' and 'America of Roosevelt and Truman a natural and indispensable ally', had betrayed its responsibilities since April 1951: without renouncing the Atlantic alliance it was out to win 'a few cheap cheers' by telling 'half-truths' about American life calculated to 'inflamm the basest type of anti-American feeling'. Well-trained by now to answer such charges, Tribune responded (on the same page) that 'the real danger to the cause of peace' was to follow the headlines of the Tory press as 'Denis Healey and his friends are busy doing' and 'brand every critic of American policy as anti-American.' It recalled all the praise given to American progressives in Tribune and One Way Only; but in the past two years, it argued, American policies had changed for the worse. And that some of these policies derived 'from the normal workings of American capitalism', was definitely no reason for Socialists to 'hold their tongues'.¹⁴⁴

Bevanite attitudes towards the United States, however, continued to be a focal point for Right-wing attacks. Will Lawther, returning from a convention of the American United Miners which he attended a week after Morecambe, told the Daily Herald that 'American labour' could not understand a 'friendly' British Labour conference that 'cheers and elects those who are definitely anti-American'.¹⁴⁵ His remark in New York that Bevan had 'his feet in Moscow and his eyes on 10 Downing Street'¹⁴⁶ was among the mulder rhetorical barbs in a campaign against the Bevanites which had been in full swing since the Bevanite success in the voting at Morecambe. The first anti-Bevanite blow came during the conference itself when Arthur Deakin, amid noisy interruptions from the floor, promised a widespread effort to counter those people within the party who had 'set

up a caucus' and engaged in 'vicious attacks' in Tribune ¹⁴⁷ Two days after Morecambe was over, Hugh Gaitskell made a controversial and famous speech at Stalybridge in which he called on the Party to restore the authority of the leadership by ending the attempt at 'mob rule by a group of frustrated journalists'. His speech caused an uproar, in particular his allegation that many constituency delegates at Morecambe were Communist or Communist-inspired; but he struck an echo with the hitherto indecisive Attlee. ¹⁴⁸ At the first PLP meeting in the new session, he forced a decision by 188 to 51 banning all unofficial groups within the party. The Bevanites disbanded, under protest, but Bevan, personally convinced that the leadership could no longer overlook the Left after Morecambe, believed that it was time to make peace and he put himself forward for the shadow cabinet.

His re-election by the PLP in the twelfth and last place, the only one for the Bevanites, caused some resentment among his followers, but it was enough to herald a period of relative calm. The Bevanite feud had suddenly melted away and the Labour Party could unite with relief on economic issues and attacks on the Tories. However, Richard Crossman noted that on foreign affairs and defence - the real bone of contention between Left and Right, in which the argument over relations with the American allies was central - the differences had been ignored rather than resolved. ¹⁴⁹ It was indeed over these issues that in 1954 the Bevanite quarrel exploded in force again in the House of Commons. That the open Party warfare over Anglo-American relations was muted for more than a year was due more to changes in the United States than in the Labour Party. And it was not an improvement of the image of the American allies, as in 1948-49, but rather a great deterioration, which united Labour Party opinion.

Throughout the course of 1952, British public opinion closely followed the American presidential campaign, which was regarded as no less important to Britain's own fate. The violent Republican campaign, with the isolationist Senator Robert Taft as a prospective candidate, naturally found no favour in Britain where opinion was overwhelmingly in favour of the Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson. British fears of a Taftian Presidency withdrawing American troops from Europe and going to war in the Far East receded with Eisenhower's nomination as Republican candidate, but there was still much criticism of Ike's (and John Foster Dulles') more belligerent election speeches on the subject of the Cold War, and in particular his failure to distance himself from the vitriolic election speeches of McCarthy. When Eisenhower won the election in November, with the Republicans also taking full control of Congress, Churchill himself admitted in private to being 'greatly disturbed' and thinking 'war much more probable'¹⁵⁰, though in public, as always, British Conservatives and Liberals professed enough faith in the wartime hero's commitment to his old friends to accept the verdict of the American voters.¹⁵¹ Labour Party opinion, however, resented the Republicans for their domestic agenda even more than for their potential isolationism. The Republican land-slide, a Daily Herald editorial stated echoing 1946, ended an 'epoch of progress' in American history which had begun twenty years before, by bringing into power those who were 'unashamedly reactionary.'¹⁵² It was 'a tragic setback

to the cause of human decency and political sanity all around the world', Tribune explained: 'Wall Street will rejoice at the murder of American "socialism".'¹⁵³

Bevan, perhaps sensitive to the outcries about his rhetorical style when speaking about the Americans, chided Michael Foot for Tribune's harsh article on the elections (if the Bevanite gossip which Richard Crossman offered to American Embassy officials is to be believed).¹⁵⁴ However, in the following weekend Jennie Lee wrote viciously of 'Herr Eisenhower's electoral victory' while comforting readers by reminding them that 'millions of Americans share our fears.'¹⁵⁵ The Republican victory in fact also proved, as Richard Crossman observed, 'that those who accused us of being anti-American for saying that McCarthy and MacArthur represented important forces were pretty silly.'¹⁵⁶ The Bevanite lesson from the American election was simple. With the new Administration in Washington, Britain had to speak her mind with even greater frankness than in the past.¹⁵⁷ And in the course of the next few years, the spectre of John Foster Dulles roaming abroad and Joseph McCarthy at home ensured that it would not only be the Labour left who would be speaking out.

Notes and References

- 1 Aneurin Bevan, In Place of Fear (London: William Heinemann, 1952), pp. 17-18.
2. One Way Only: A Socialist Analysis of the Present World Crisis (London: Tribune Pamphlet, 1951), p. 3.

- 3 Michael Foot, Aneurin Bevan. A Biography, Volume One, 1897-1945 (London Macgibbon and Kee, 1975), pp. 192-194, 466-467
- 4 H C. Debates, Vol. 280, col 812 (10/7/1933).
5. Reynolds News, 27/10/57, p. 1.
- 6 Bevan recalled his experiences from the strike at a lunch in the American Embassy in 1948, according to Gaitskell making it plain 'pleasantly but unmistakably, that he held the lowest opinion of American justice.' See Williams, Hugh Gaitskell, p 164.
7. New Leader, 12/4/1935, p. 3.
8. Tribune, 7/4/1944, pp. 6-7.
9. John Campbell, Nye Bevan: A Biography (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1994), p. 192
10. Bevan, In Place of Fear, p. 126.
11. LPCR, 1948, p. 139. Hugh Gaitskell at this stage could even admire the way that Bevan was 'extremely rude about Americans' in a private conversation with Senator Pat McCarran, a reactionary Democrat and Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee involved with Marshall aid, who 'lapped up to' Bevan's criticism because of 'the way it was done.' See Williams, Hugh Gaitskell, p. 205.
12. Michael Foot, Aneurin Bevan: A Biography, Volume Two, 1945-1960 (London: Davis-Poynter, 1973), p. 230
13. Cabinet conclusions, 1 8/1950 PRO, CAB128/18.
- 14 Daily Telegraph, 22/11/1950, p. 1.
- 15 Daily Telegraph, 23/11/1950, p. 1.
- 16 H C Debates, Vol. 484, Col 736 (15 2 1951).
- 17 H C Debates, Vol. 487, Cols. 34-43 (23 4 1951)
18. Tribune, 4 5 1951, pp. 5-6. See also Tom Driberg, 'America takes the hint', Reynolds News, 29/4 1951, p 4
- 19 Jenkins Bevanism, p 154.
- 20 Peggie Duff, Left, Left, Left (London. Allison and Busby, 1971), p. 36.

- 21 Richard Crossman offered this version as early as November 1951, see Janet Morgan (ed), The Backbench Diaries of Richard Crossman (London. Hamish and Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, 1981), p. 47.
22. Ben Pimlott, Harold Wilson (London: HarperCollins, 1992), p. 174
23. The Observer, 29/4/51, p. 2.
- 24 Ayerst, The Guardian, p. 607.
25. Manchester Guardian, 19/5/1951, p. 4.
26. Manchester Guardian, 24/4/1951, p. 4; 18/6/1951, p. 4
27. Manchester Guardian, 21/7/51, p. 4. See also Tribune, 27/7/1951, p. 1; Tribune, 10/8/1951, p. 1.
28. Tribune, 19 9/1952, p. 2.
29. One Way Only, p. 4.
30. One Way Only, p. 12. Michael Foot, who with Jennie Lee was regarded as the most militant influence on Bevan, wrote the pamphlet's section on foreign affairs which some of the group wanted to tone down. See Pimlott (ed.), Dalton Diaries, p. 547.
31. One Way Only, p. 12.
32. The Bevanites argued, for example, that the resignations brought about the quick American solution for the raw materials problem more than the quiet negotiations which had been conducted by Government officials. See Tribune, 4/5/1951, pp. 5-6.
33. Already at the 1950 conference, Ian Mikardo urged Labour backbenchers 'not to be mealy-mouthed' so that they would bear the same influence on Anglo-American policy that the American Republicans had because of their vocal anti-Communist rhetoric. See LPCR, 1950, p. 142
34. In October 1951, the American Congress enacted a provision called the Battle Act which required the Administration to cut off aid from any foreign nation that refused to restrict 'strategic exports' to the Communist block. See Leigh-Phippard, 'US Strategic', p. 735-745. In the TUC conference in September 1951, a motion calling to end 'American interference' with East-West trade was defeated by the Leadership only because of the hostile wording the acceptance of more polite motions demanding the promotion of such trade became a

regular feature of Labour Party conferences. See Epstein, Britain, p. 66, Harrison, Trade Unions, p. 120, p. 139n.

35. Tribune, 26/9/1952, p. 1. Another Bevanite argument was that switching British industry under American pressure from the production of 'motor cars to tanks', even if with the help of American aid, precipitated a loss of civilian export markets to American, German and Japanese competition. See Richard Crossman, H.C. Debates, Vol. 494, cols. 285-289 (20/11/1951).
36. Tribune, 19/11/1954, p. 1.
37. Tribune, 21/9/1951, p. 2.
38. In Place of Dollars by Harold Wilson (London Tribune pamphlet, September 1952), pp. 14-15. See also Kingsley Martin, Socialism And The Welfare State (Fabian lecture; London: Victor Gollancz, 1951), p. 18.
39. Leslie Hunter, The Road to Brighton Pier (London: Arthur Barker, 1959), pp 56-57. The pamphlet which caused all the anger was called Going Our Way, and the Bevanites wanted to stop it being printed before the elections but did not have time. See Duff, Left, pp. 38-39.
40. The Times, 10/10/1951, p. 7. See also Lord Vansittart in the Daily Graphic, 16/10/1951, p. 4
41. Tribune, 19/10/51, p. 8. On the growing gulf between David C. Williams and his former Tribune associates, see Ayer, 'American Liberals', pp. 459-462.
42. The Persian oil dispute which began in April was a kind of Korea in reverse where it was the turn of Labour Party spokesmen to complain that the Americans were not giving enough support to their allies. See H.C. Debates, Vol. 489, cols. 765-769, cols. 775-778 (21 6 1951)
43. The Times, 11/1 1952, p. 2.
44. Sunday Pictorial, 9/12/1951, p. 7.
45. Lord Moran, Winston Churchill The Struggle for Survival, 1940-1965 (London. Constable, 1966), p. 353
46. Sunday Pictorial, 6 1/1952, p. 7.
47. MacDonald, Korea, pp. 129-131; Duke, US Defence Bases, pp. 77-82.
48. Sunday Pictorial, 27 1/1952, p. 7.
49. The Spectator, 8 2 1952, p. 164.

- 50 H.C. Debates, Vol 495, Cols. 830-832 (5/2/1952).
- 51 Morgan (ed), Backbench Diaries, p. 69.
- 52 H.C. Debates, Vol 495, Cols. 839, 857 (5/2/1952)
- 53 H.C. Debates, Vol. 495, Col. 842 (5/2/1952)
- 54 H.C. Debates, Vol. 494, Cols. 67-68 (19/11/1951).
- 55 H.C. Debates, Vol 496, Col. 953 (26/2/1952).
- 56 H.C. Debates, Vol. 496, Col. 979 (26/2/1952).
- 57 H.C. Debates, Vol. 496, Cols. 985-986 (26/2/1952).
- 58 Ibid.
59. Bevan, In Place of Fear, p. 120.
60. See speech at Edinburgh: Daily Herald, 31/3/1952. An American official believed that Bevan made statements in this speech which were 'favorable to the U.S.' because he realized that the Scottish attitude towards the United States was more favourable because of the ties of recent emigration. Memorandum by Vernon B. Zirkle, American consulate, Glasgow, 31/3/1952. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 3509, 741.00/3-3152.
61. The Times, 17/3/1952.
- 62 Congressional Records, Vol. 98, Part 5, 82nd Congress, 2nd session, pp. 5806-5808 (22/5/1952).
63. Manchester Guardian, 20/3/1952, p. 4.; The Times, 21/3/1952.
64. The Observer, 23/3/1952, p. 4.
65. George H. Gallup, The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls Great Britain, 1937-1975 (New York: Random House, 1976), p. 279.
66. 'The Influence of Bevanism in British Politics', Department of State, Intelligence Report No. 5846 (25/3/52) O S S /State Department intelligence and research reports, Washington D C.. University Publications of America, Part X, Europe: 1950-1961 supplement, reel 10 This analysis was no doubt influenced by the reports of David Linebaugh, the knowledgeable attache at the American Embassy in London. See for example his memorandum on 'Attitudes toward the United States', 18 3 1952 NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 3509, 741 00/3-1852.
- 67 Morgan (ed), Backbench Diaries, p. 42.

- 68 Daily Express, 15/12/1952, p. 1 Christiansen to Beaverbrook, 17/12/1952
Beaverbrook papers, House of Lords Record Office, file H/155
69. Chisholm and Davie, Beaverbrook, pp 470-471
70. The Times, 24/3/1952, p 4
71. Socialist Commentary, April 1952, p. 75.
72. H C. Debates, Vol. 503, col 357 (1/7/1952)
73. Morgan (ed.), Backbench Diaries, pp. 75-76.
74. NS&N, 1/3/1952, p. 236.
75. H C Debates, Vol. 494, cols 285-287 (20/11/1951).
76. Williams, (ed.), Gaitskell Diary, p. 311.
77. Haseler, The Gaitskellites, pp. 62-67.
78. R.H.S. Crossman (ed.), New Fabian Essays (London: Turnstile Press, 1952), pp. 161-179; pp. 186-188; pp. 204-209. In the following year Crosland published an assessment of Britain's Economic Problem. It included a standard socialist warning against convertibility and other American policies, but found fault also with the 'rancorous abuse' and 'sanctimoniousness about America on the British Left.' See C.A.R. Crosland, Britain's Economic Problem (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953), p. 206.
79. Haseler, The Gaitskellites, p 73.
- 80 Denis Healey, The Time of My Life (London: Michael Joseph, 1989), pp. 119-123. In 1951, Denis Healey was denied a State Department 'Smith-Mundt' grant to visit the US because of his Communist past See Patrick O'Sheel to State Department, 25/7/1951 NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511 41 7-2651.
- 81 Crossman (ed), New Fabian Essays, p. 178.
- 82 Lord Pakenham, 'Bevanism As I See It', Tribune, 8/8 1952, p. 8
83. New Republic, 28 7 1952, p 20; Crossman (ed), New Fabian Essays, p. 13.
- 84 H C Debates, Vol. 494, col 1007 (26/11/1951).
- 85 H C. Debates, Vol. 497, cols 489-490 (5 3 1952)
- 86 Kenneth Harris, Attlee (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), pp. 497-498, Bernard Donoughue and G W. Jones, Herbert Morrison: Portrait of a Politician

- (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), p. 518, Williams (ed.), Gaitskell diary, p. 313.
87. Jenkins, Bevanism, p. 161-162.
88. Socialist Commentary, May 1952, pp. 97-99; p. 108.
89. Dozens of resolutions poured into Transport House criticizing an NEC discussion pamphlet, Problems of Foreign Policy, published in April, which emphasized the importance of the American global involvement. See 'Analysis of Comments on Discussion Pamphlet: Labour's Foreign Policy', NEC Minutes, card 441.
90. A Gallup poll in September 1952 showed that of the 34 per cent of Labour voters who supported Bevan, 28 per cent did so because he 'would stand up to the Americans'. Of the 53 per cent who opposed him, mainly because of his divisiveness and demagoguery, only 12 per cent thought he was 'too anti-American.' See Gallup, International Polls, p. 278.
91. Williams (ed.), Gaitskell Diary, pp. 319.
92. *Ibid.*, pp. 316-320.
93. H.C. Debates, Vol. 501, col. 1368 (28/5/1952).
94. H.C. Debates, Vol. 501, cols. 446-449 (21/5/1952).
95. Cabinet conclusion, 29 4/1952. PRO, CAB128/24. Martin Gilbert, Never Despair: Winston S. Churchill, 1945-1965 (London: Heinemann, 1988), p. 757. See the contents of the Archbishop of York's diocesan leaflet in The Times, 28/4/1952, p. 4. For his attitudes in general, see Dianne Kirby, 'The Church of England and the Cold War Nuclear Debate', Twentieth Century British History, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1993), pp. 250-83.
96. H.C. Debates, Vol. 500, col. 1426 (14 5/1952).
97. Sunday Pictorial, 25 5/1952, p. 2; The Times, 23/5/1952, p. 7
98. H.C. Debates, Vol. 501, col. 1821.
99. Tribune, 27/6/1952, pp. 1-2, NS&N, 28 6 1952, p. 757.
100. H.C. Debates, Vol. 503, col. 331 (1/7/1952).
101. Morgan (ed.), Backbench Diaries, p. 118.
102. H.C. Debates, Vol. 503, col. 356-357 (1/7/1952).
103. H.C. Debates, Vol. 502, col. 2267 (25 6/1952).

- 104 H C Debates, Vol. 502, col. 2265 (25/6/1952).
- 105 D N. Pritt 'More Light on Korea', Labour Monthly, February 1951, pp. 109-116
- 106 Robert C. Cotterel, Izzy: A Biography of I F. Stone (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 165-167. I F Stone's theories on the origins of the Korean war have been shown to be largely wrong thanks to post-Cold War access to Soviet archives. See chapter 4, note 1.
107. Martin to Stone, 3/3/1952. New Statesman papers, Topics 1948-1952, America, P-W. See correspondence between D.N. Pritt and Kingsley Martin in March and April 1952, in D.N. Pritt papers, BLPES, 1/22 See also James Cameron's review in Tribune, 'There Had To Be a Korea', 13/6/1952, pp. 5-6.
108. H.C. Debates, Vol. 504, cols. 4-6 (21/7/1952). A copy of Korea ... I Saw The Truth by Jack Gaster (London: Jack Gaster, 1952), can be found at the TUC Archives, Mss. 292, 951.5/1.
109. H.C. Debates, Vol. 505, cols. 1432-1439 (23/10/1952); Vol. 512, cols. 19-25 (2/3/1953).
110. H.C. Debates, Vol. 507, col. 125, (4/11/1952); Vol. 503, col. 1285 (9/7/1952).
- 111 Barbara Castle warned already in November 1951 that a 'a dangerous mood is operating in the United States as a result of unsubstantiated atrocity stories.' See H.C. Debates, Vol. 494, col. 217 (20/11/1951). 'I know I shall be accused of being anti-American,' she during the Yalu debates, 'but do not let us make truth a casualty in peace as in war.' She later added that the 'first atrocity story came from our side' See H.C. Debates, Vol. 503, col. 326; 330 (1/7/1952). Crossman, who seemed to enjoy to be regarded by Gaitskell as irresponsible, told 'Hugh' that one report was worth more investigating, only to discount it himself a few days later. See Janet Morgan (ed), Backbench Diaries, p. 139.
- 112 NS&N, 12 4 1952, p. 425; 28/6/1952, p 761.
113. Martin to William L. Shirer, 10 6/1952 New Statesman papers, Topics, c 1948-1952, America, P-W.
- 114 For the career of the Dr. Hewlett Johnson, see David Caute, The Fellow Travellers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 260-263.

- 115 Daily Mail, 9/7/1952, p. 1.
116. Daily Mail, 10-14/7/1952; H.C. Debates, Vol. 503, cols. 1283-7 (9/7/1952); House of Lords Debates, Vol. 177, cols. 1118-1164 (15/7/1952).
- 117 Cabinet conclusions, 10 7/1952 PRO, CAB128/25.
- 118 NS&N, 12/7/1952, p 33
119. NS&N, 27/12/1952, p. 773. Kingsley Martin to Margery Fry, 9/10/52. New Statesman papers, Editorial Correspondence 1948-52, A-G. The NS&N finally put the matter to rest in a lengthy essay a year later, 12/12/1953, pp. 748-749.
120. Report of Proceedings at the 84th Annual Trades Union Congress, 1952, pp. 383-386.
121. Ibid, pp. 355-382
122. Manchester Guardian, 3/9/1952, p. 6.
123. Kuisel, Seducing the French, pp 48-50.
124. Jenkins, Bevanism, p. 209.
125. The Sunday Dispatch, 10/8/1952, p. 4.
126. New Republic, 7/7/1952, p. 9.
127. Foot, Bevan, Vol. Two, p. 379.
128. LPCR, 1952, p 79.
- 129 Ibid, p. 154. The resolution was moved by the Shop Workers (USDAW) and was supported among others by the Amalgamated Engineers (AEU), the Railwaymen (NUR), and the communist-dominated Electrical Trades Union. See Harrison, Trade Unions, p. 225.
- 130 LPCR, 1952, pp 116-117; p 139. The Executive rejected, however, a motion which called explicitly for British socialists to lead a global Third Force independent of both superpowers See Ibid, p. 121.
- 131 Ibid, p 82
132. Tribune, 3/10/1952, p. 2.
- 133 LPCR, 1952, p. 131; p 119, p 146.
- 134 British Embassy in Washington to Foreign Office, 11 10/1952 PRO 371/97588, AU1021/14 'Americans are well aware of the aid - although possibly indirect', wrote an FO official, 'that elements like the Bevanites give to

the Communists.' See Minute by C.G. Thornton, 15/10/52. PRO, FO371/97588, AU1021/14.

135. The Economist, 4/10/1952, p. 8
136. Manchester Guardian, 1/10/1952, p. 4
137. Daily Mirror, 6/10/1952, p. 2.
138. LPCR, 1952, p. 108.
139. *Ibid*, p. 101.
140. *Ibid*, p. 128.
141. *Ibid*, p. 132. Gaitskell argued this too in the Daily Herald, 14/10/1952, p. 4.
142. LPCR, 1952, pp. 123-124.
143. Forward, 11/10/1952, p. 4 The Conservative MP Christopher Hollis made the same comparison a week later. See Tribune, 17/10/1952, p. 3.
144. Tribune, 10/10/1952, p. 3.
145. Daily Herald, 28/10 1952, p. 2.
146. Tribune, 17/10/1952, p.5.
147. LPCR, 1952, pp. 126-127.
148. Williams, Hugh Gaitskell, pp. 304-307.
149. Morgan (ed.), Backbench Diaries, pp. 186-187.
150. John Colville, The Fringes of Power: Downing Street Diaries, 1939-1955 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), p. 654.
151. Epstein, Britain, pp. 170-172; pp. 191-192.
152. Daily Herald, 6/11 1952, p. 4.
153. Tribune, 7/11/1952, p. 1.
154. Embassy to State Department, 25/11/52. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 3511, 741.00 11-2552.
155. Tribune, 14 11/1952, p. 3.
156. Morgan (ed.), Backbench Diaries, pp. 176. Crossman wrote, however, that he could not impress on Bevan the idea that a victory for Stevenson would have meant Gaitskell was right. Bevan was too disappointed because he could not accept that sometimes democracies can vote wrong See *ibid*, p. 175;p. 177.
157. Manchester Guardian, 24 11/1952, p. 10.

Chapter Six: “We Are Not Anti-American But....”

For most of President Eisenhower’s first period in office, Anglo-American relations provided almost endless scope for bitterness over questions of American aid, British trade, war with China and peace with Russia. Persistent fears, in particular, that Washington might drag the world into war produced widespread irritation in Britain, amplified with every new war crisis in the Far East: Korea in 1953, Indo-China in 1954, and Formosa in 1955. This disquiet at the domination of Britain’s fate and fortune by the United States continued to find expression mainly in the Labour Party, partly because of the socialist ideological antagonism to American power and private enterprise, and partly due to the Opposition Party’s freedom from the constraints of office.

However, the purpose of this chapter is to show that despite the fact that ‘anti-Americanism’ continued to be a widely-used and hotly-denied accusation levelled at the Left, British responses to American power were much more uniform across the political spectrum than Party rhetoric would suggest. In the first place, the attitudes of the Labour Left were more than balanced by an Atlanticist alliance of Right-wing MPs in the PLP and trade union bosses. Secondly, vehement objections to American influence could be heard on both Left and Right in British political life whenever the threat to British culture from the forces of American materialism and mass culture was discussed. And finally, the forceful eruption of hostility towards the American allies in the ranks of the Conservative Party during the Suez crisis, even if short-lived, openly demonstrated that even in the narrow sphere of Anglo-

American political relations, the Left had no monopoly on 'anti-Americanism' in British postwar political life.

i

British opinion had always tended to explain the forces operating in American life in terms of good and wicked personalities. However, at no time more than the early 1950s had all that was wrong with the United States been so closely identified in Britain with two Americans - John Foster Dulles and Senator Joseph McCarthy. John Foster Dulles, the more important of the two, and whose impact was felt in Britain much longer, was a successful Wall Street lawyer who applied a mixture of legalistic rigidity and Presbyterian moral certainty to the affairs of the world. A Secretary of State designate nearly from birth, Dulles' involvement with American foreign policy began in 1919 at the Paris Peace Conference. But it was negotiating the Japanese Peace Treaty thirty years later, as the State Department's Republican Adviser, which really propelled him into the consciousness of the British Left as a leading 'carpet bagger' of the American Century proclaimed by his fellow Presbyterian and favourite publisher Henry Luce.¹ Churchill and Eden had no more liking for the impetuous crusader whose 'liberation' concept had terrified the British since it was first propagated during the 1952 Republican election campaign, Churchill even seems to have been physically repulsed by the 'great slab of a face'.² Only days after being appointed Secretary of State, Dulles managed to provoke British outcries at his 'bull-headed beefing' and 'Big Stick' diplomacy.³ It was triggered by an interview in which Dulles threatened 'a little re-thinking' of

American policy in Western Europe (including 'England'), where Americans had 'invested' so much, did not show more willingness to integrate.⁴

Britain's dependence on the United States was resented, of course, even when not highlighted by Dulles' brazen way of telling allies what they ought to do. The Conservative Government adopted the slogan 'Trade, Not Aid' to impress across the Atlantic the importance of positive steps to close the much-talked-about 'dollar gap'; and achieving independence from American aid was declared to be 'one of the major objectives of the Labour Party'.⁵ Eisenhower's inability, however, to sway the protectionist forces in Congress did not inspire great faith in the fitness of the United States to preach free trade to others or to provide the economic leadership that the world needed. 'We have seen a Tory Chancellor and a Tory President of the Board of Trade', Harold Wilson pointed out, 'condemn American protectionism in terms no less strong than those which Tory reviews of "In Place of Dollars" attacked as "shabby anti-Americanism"'.⁶ Furthermore, American pressure to increase the economic blockade of China, always an explosive issue combining commercial rivalry with Cold War politics, threatened to injure British prosperity and certainly injured British pride. The Battle Act was administered with great reserve but even the most forgiving Atlanticist opinion was enraged by the likes of Senator Knowland - leader of the 'Asia Firsters' in Congress - who denounced British 'China trade' as a 'moral outrage' despite the fact that American imports from China were almost as great.⁷

The event which dominated the international atmosphere for most of the year was the death of Stalin in March, an event seized by Churchill, 79 years old, to perform a last great act of statesmanship. Leaving far behind him the cautious

Eisenhower and his own Cabinet and FO (Eden was ill)⁸, Churchill called in the House on the 11th of May 1953 for an informal 'conference on the highest level' to bring about a possible 'generation of peace'⁹ Corresponding with the 'Coronation mood' promising the dawn on Britain and the world of a new Elizabethan Age¹⁰, he won overwhelming public approval for his proposals¹¹; nowhere more so than on the Labour Left which, driven by fervent belief in the power of rational discussion and genuine goodwill to solve all problems, had been urging Four Power negotiations since 1950.¹² Britain had at last 'spoken up' independently of the Americans and attitudes previously rebuked as 'anti-Americanism', the Bevanites emphasized, had suddenly become respectable.¹³

To complete Left-wing jubilation, Attlee on the following day went even further than Churchill, emphasising that Peking should be given a seat at the Security Council and castigating those who saw only 'Soviet intrigue' in the rising tide of nationalism in South-East Asia. He also had a lot to say directly about the United States. Hoping no-one would suggest he was 'in any way anti-American', Attlee wished 'to state some facts' about the contradictions in American foreign policy caused by an American Constitution originally 'framed for an isolationist state.' The Administration - faced by multifarious pressures from powerful 'groups and interests' in Congress and operating through Government Departments less 'integrated' than those in Britain - were 'not really master in their own house.' '[O]ne sometimes wonders', Attlee remarked in the sentence that would cause most offence, 'who is the more powerful, the President or Senator McCarthy.' Fully supporting the Prime Minister's call for a summit, Attlee (unlike Churchill) believed that because of the 'peculiar Constitutional position of America', it would

have to be well-prepared so that Eisenhower would be saved from Wilson's fate after Versailles.¹⁴

Attlee's comments, as sympathetic American commentators observed¹⁵, were common enough among American political scientists. (An isolationist group led by Senator Bricker was trying to amend the Constitution and limit even further the treaty-making powers of the President.) Yet perhaps because, as one commentator suggested, American sensitivity to foreign criticism of the Constitution was like British sensitivity to foreign criticism of the Monarchy¹⁶, a storm of protest erupted in the United States, fully exploited by Senator Knowland who accused Churchill and Attlee of advocating a Far Eastern 'Munich' and called on Americans, if need be, to 'go it alone.' McCarthy, who used the episode as part of his own campaign against foreign trade with China, in particular British 'blood trade', produced in typical fashion an old picture from the 'long and odious career' of 'comrade' Attlee which showed him saluting the International Brigade in Spain.¹⁷

This particular storm was mostly over within a week but a much more prolonged wave of discontent was brewing in Britain. After Churchill had suffered a stroke in June, and with Eden still absent, foreign affairs passed into the hands of Lord Salisbury whose meeting in mid-July with Dulles and the French Foreign Minister Bidault, in which the concept of high-level talks was substituted for proposals for a Foreign Minister's conference on Germany, was regarded by the Labour Left as a 'surrender in Washington'.¹⁸ British disappointment, however, was not confined to the Labour Left, in fact, Churchill's grumbling in bed about the 'weak and stupid' Eisenhower sounded remarkably like Tribune headlines about American 'stupidity'.¹⁹ What was more, the distress at the failure to progress

towards détente with the Russians was accentuated by new fears of American belligerency in the Far East, where the Korean war had ended at last with a shaky armistice in July 1953, but a military pact between the United States and South Korea was immediately announced by Rhee and Dulles in an aggressive mood. British confidence in the American ability to offer leadership or listen to the concerns of allies, the American Embassy reported in August 1953, had sunk to the lowest point since the Korean war crisis of January 1951.²⁰ However, reports of a 'strong wave of anti-American feeling', Salisbury privately told an American journalist, were an exaggeration of the American press: 'The British people were not anti-American', he said, just 'anxious...lest policies of the United States Government might lead the world into a new war which neither country wanted.'²¹ Harold Nicolson put the same notion in his diary more forcefully. This was no 'flood of anti-American hatred', he wrote, only fear 'that the destinies of the world should be in the hands of a giant with the limbs of an undergraduate, the emotions of a spinster and the brain of a pea-hen.'²²

Whatever the Tories said about American foreign policy in private or in their diaries, Labour Left speakers were happy to articulate, and in public, with equally sharp images and colourful prose. '[I]t has become increasingly clear in recent weeks', Driberg wrote in Tribune, that 'the chief danger to world peace is not in Moscow but in the citadel of Mammon; neurotic and lobby-paralysed Washington....'²³ However, it was Attlee rather than the Bevanites who was now leading the criticism of American foreign policy in the Far East; and it was Attlee who, since his brush-up with McCarthy, was constantly denying, just like Bevan in the previous year, any motivation by 'anti-American' prejudice.²⁴ There was

‘nothing anti-American’, he responded to Tory ‘interjections’, in raising the matter of Dulles’s apparent lack of interest in the opinion of allies in Korea.²⁵ Some Americans, Attlee made the familiar complaint about American sensitivity in a Party Political broadcast, reacted ‘violently to even the mildest criticism of American policy’ which ‘true friendship’ demanded that the British offer.²⁶ ‘Hard luck, Clem’, Ian Mikardo gloated; Attlee, he claimed, did not protect the Bevanites when they were accused before of ‘arid, sterile anti-Americanism.’²⁷

Years later, Eden told Attlee’s biographer that the Labour leader’s ‘temperate’ comments were of great value by publicly expressing concerns about American policy that the Government could only say privately.²⁸ At the time, however, the hotchpotch of partisan polemics and transatlantic touchiness ensured that Eden’s own generous (and ‘temperate’) admission would be reserved for later years.

Attlee’s ‘anti-Americanism’, the British and American Right-wing Press claimed before and after the annual Conference at Margate, was the only ‘badge of respectability’ around which he could unite his Labour Party.²⁹ Most of the Conference’s time was devoted to discussion of the domestic aspects of the new policy document Challenge to Britain but a long NEC resolution on foreign affairs provided enough controversy. It made the usual pledge to NATO ‘as a framework for close co-operation with the United States’; but by deploring ‘the failure of the Western Powers to maintain the initiative in efforts to break the East-West deadlock’ and ‘urging’ them to delay German rearmament until further efforts were made ‘to secure the peaceful reunification of Germany’, the resolution sent a contradictory message warmly received by the Left and lamented by Denis Healey.³⁰ The dominant image of the American allies at Margate seemed to have

been, moreover, that of reactionaries at home and abroad. A motion moved by the Bevanite Harold Davies urging the expansion of East-West trade which would have normally been accepted by the NEC was rejected because it referred directly to 'American imposed restrictions'³¹ Resolutions were passed, however, deploring the recent conclusion of a military pact between the United States and Spain, and regretting 'the harm done to Anglo-American relations by political witch-hunting in the U S A.'³² No wonder that the Party Secretary Morgan Phillips, who closed the debate on foreign affairs, found it necessary to remind delegates of 'the other America' of trade unions and liberals, but also to say on behalf of the Party as a whole,

Let us clearly refute the charge that sometimes is now being made, that the Labour Party is anti-American. We are not anti-American. We are not anti any people as such. But it is our duty as socialists to condemn intolerance and reaction wherever it is found³³

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It is indeed impossible to account for the attitudes towards the United States of the British Left in these years, in actual fact in Britain as a whole, without a special consideration of the image of American intolerance and reaction created by those American anti-Communist attitudes and activities known collectively, and misleadingly, as 'McCarthyism'.³⁴ The excesses of domestic anti-Communism in postwar American life had been scrutinised by British observers with dismay long before the junior Senator from Wisconsin launched his infamous anti-Communist

career in February 1950.³⁵ However, it was during Joseph McCarthy's heyday - for nearly two years following the 1952 elections, when even President Eisenhower seemed to be terrorized into submission - that the phenomenon to which he lent his name for posterity became a most serious source of friction between the United States and her allies. McCarthyism could be a cause for ridicule, as during the tragi-comic tour in April 1953 of McCarthy's young henchmen, Roy Cohn and David Schine, sent on a whirlwind mission to detect 'subversion' in American Embassies in Europe. Much more often, however, McCarthyism was perceived as a threat to American democracy and a hollow mockery at the heart of the American pretence to lead the 'free' world. Too many of its elements resembled Nazi and Communist totalitarianism: the methods of demagoguery; the 'smear' campaigns; the 'informers'; the 'purges' in the civil service and education system; the 'black-listing' of writers, artists and entertainers; the incidents of 'book-burning'. And together with these unflattering political images, McCarthyism also reinforced among foreign observers some of the old negative images of American national 'character' and culture: emotionalism, immaturity, brutality, intolerance, conformism, anti-intellectualism, philistinism

McCarthy himself elicited an almost universal sense of contempt in British political quarters; his tirades on British 'blood trade' with China ensured him the enmity of all but the most rabid anti-Communists in Britain.³⁶ Throughout 1953, in the highly-publicized hearings of his Investigations sub-Committee, McCarthy seemed to subdue first the State Department before moving, with no apparent response from Eisenhower, to audaciously challenge the United States Army. British disgust at this unsavoury spectacle came to a peak in February 1954 during

the famous army-McCarthy hearings (that would soon bring the Senator's downfall), when another humiliating capitulation of the Administration provoked the News Chronicle to splash across its front-page the headline 'FUHRER McCARTHY'.³⁷ Such excited treatment in an Atlanticist newspaper, normally careful to report American affairs with patience and moderation, showed how much McCarthy offended the most loyal allies of the United States. Only the Americans themselves, they believed, could and would get rid of McCarthy but in the meantime he was not an American domestic affair; his harassment of the Administration seemed to have a pernicious impact on the conduct of American foreign policy and the damage he had done to the American reputation around the globe was a godsend to the Communists and those 'anti-Americans' using him 'as a stick with which the Republic itself might be beaten.'³⁸ 'To be pro-American and to be anti-McCarthy are the same thing', declared The Spectator; 'To despair about getting rid of McCarthy is to despair about America, which is, in turn, to despair about the world.'³⁹

On the British Left, however, McCarthy was more than 'a grotesque and unpleasant feature of American public life'; he represented a 'deep social malaise', explained the NS&N, that 'would have thrown up others cast in a similar mould' even if McCarthy 'had never left his farm in Wisconsin'.⁴⁰ That to express this opinion 'was resented and ridiculed as a sign of anti-Americanism' was not, of course, going to silence the NS&N and its editor Kingsley Martin, who responded with defiance to the continuous accusations that 'anti-American' prejudice caused his weekly to exaggerate the power of McCarthy and McCarthyism, while ignoring the opposition of American liberals and trade unions.⁴¹ How prejudiced was the

NS&N? A meticulous survey has shown that between 1947 and 1954, 34 per cent of all its articles and news items on the United States either dealt with or mentioned the American preoccupation with Communists and subversion, as opposed to 17 per cent in The Spectator, 11 per cent in The Economist and 6.5 per cent in The Times.⁴² This presents something very close to an obsession with McCarthyism - especially in 1954 when a staggering 68 per cent of all American coverage in the NS&N was devoted to the 'witch-hunt'.⁴³ Yet when the *content* of the news 'coverage' is considered, the same study revealed that the negative images derived from the 'witch-hunt' were no different from those projected by the Liberal and Conservative press.⁴⁴ No doubt, the ideological orientation of the NS&N, and the rest of the Labour Left, meant that it was less ready to believe that McCarthy and his like would disappear as long as they were sustained by 'Big Business' at home and the Cold War abroad.⁴⁵ And it was particularly sensitive to the assault on the American Left which was, after all, 'closer to home' than Communist leaders being executed in Prague.⁴⁶ However, much of the Labour Left's antipathy also came as usual from frustrated expectations. Judging the United States by its own ideals was actually a tribute to American traditions, but also a source of disappointment expressed in equally bitter terms by The Times and Manchester Guardian

Since the early nineteenth century, the treatment of the American 'negroes' had been the main source of disappointment, or sarcasm, at the failure of the Americans to live up to their own high-minded ideals. The civil rights advances in the Southern States therefore reaped immediate dividends on the British Left. In May 1954, Tribune congratulated the Supreme Court on its decision declaring racial

segregation in schools unconstitutional. This was, proclaimed Tribune on its front page, 'the best piece of news this week for people who love freedom and equality everywhere'.⁴⁷ But it was 'a sad business', wrote Jennie Lee referring to the victimization of Paul Robeson, 'that while in some sections of American life headway is being made against one form of discrimination, another form of barbarism is on the increase. It is more dangerous these days to have the wrong colour of politics in the United States than the wrong colour of skin'.⁴⁸

Britain, of course, had also set up at the outset of the Cold War its own, much less-publicized, security apparatus.⁴⁹ Yet even though both the Attlee and Churchill Government often debated how to restrict Communist propaganda activities, there was no serious attempt to ban the Communist Party in Britain and there was never the same anti-Communist domestic climate.⁵⁰ As carried out in Congressional Committees and Government 'security boards', the anti-Communist 'witch-hunt' in the United States clashed with some of the most cherished practices and traditions of the British political system. The political, cultural and legal differences between British and American domestic anti-Communism have intrigued many observers, in particular American observers, since the 1950s.⁵¹ One explanation, perhaps not emphasized enough, was how much the abhorrence of the whole spectre of American anti-Communism - aptly termed the 'intolerance of American intolerance'⁵² - made excessive manifestations of domestic anti-Communism nearly a political taboo in Britain. British tolerance and liberty, furthermore, could always be proudly compared with the flawed example 'THEY ENVY THIS LITTLE ISLAND', the Sunday Pictorial headlined Crossman's column on visiting American

students, who found that 'Britain possesses something more valuable than electric washing machines or atom bombs', meaning freedom of thought.⁵³

In 1946 Sir Waldron Smithers, an unreconstructed Tory, asked in the House whether the Labour Government would set up a House Committee on Un-British Activities on the American lines. 'No, sir', Herbert Morrison simply replied, his notes showing him to be well aware of the American original's low reputation.⁵⁴ In March 1950, one month after the infamous speech of McCarthy at Wheeling, West Virginia, in which he claimed to be holding the names of 'card carrying' Communists in the State Department, Lord Vansittart made a speech in the Lords warning of Communist infiltration into Whitehall, the BBC, universities, schools and the Church.⁵⁵ Vansittart tried in his speech to avoid the comparison with the junior Senator from Wisconsin - he even hoped that by presenting a 'fair and factual' case the 'British Upper Chamber will set an example to the American Upper Chamber' - but to no avail.⁵⁶ 'We should hate to see Lord Vansittart becoming another Senator McCarthy,' the Manchester Guardian editorialized, 'although naturally he would do his smearing with much more artistry and wit. ... We have somehow to keep our heads and avoid the American hysteria as well as the French laxity.'⁵⁷

After the 'flight' of Burgess and Maclean a year later showed that perhaps the British too were as lax as the French, American pressure led quietly to a tightening of the security system in the Civil Service. However, the Home Secretary Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe stated in 1954 that despite the 'often unjustified' American criticism, Britain had no intention of treating the Communist Party as a 'conspiracy' as it was treated in the United States.⁵⁸ Cabinet discussions on the issue of Burgess and

Maclean show that providing more powers to the Executive to deal with potential subversion - such as to restrict, as in the United States, the right of British citizens to leave the country or to travel - was regarded by the Government as politically unacceptable⁵⁹

Liberal and Left-wing opinion at Westminster was indeed extremely sensitive to any signs that the McCarthyite frame of mind was crossing the Atlantic. In October 1952, the playwright Benn Levy, a former Labour MP, privately urged Michael Foot to force a Parliamentary debate about McCarthyism, advising him that

It should, of course, all be presented not as anti-Americanism but as pained and sympathetic concern for the plight into which our unfortunate American brothers have tumbled, how their present condition is blurring and mocking the world conflict on the issue of liberty and how we should legitimately fear lest the same infection attack us too.⁶⁰

Michael Foot, and many other Labour and Liberal MPs, needed little prodding to constantly warn at Westminster of the threat of McCarthyism, in particular when British authorities seemed to be allowing, or even actively aiding, American 'witch-hunters' to extend their activities to Britain. The meeting of a BBC official at the American Embassy with Cohn and Schine was bound to raise questions or protests⁶¹, as was the screening of British civilian employees at American air bases⁶², a policeman taking details from those entering the American Embassy⁶³, reports that American Senators were on their way to investigate Communist activity in British factories⁶⁴, or that the British police was collecting evidence to help the prosecution of Professor Owen Lattimore. A China scholar accused in 1950 by McCarthy of being 'the top espionage agent' in the United States, Owen

Lattimore was cleared by a Senate investigation Committee but later indicted for perjury in 1952 in connection with his testimony before the Senate. In October 1954, a little before a federal judge finally dismissed his case for lack of evidence, the Manchester Guardian lambasted the Home Office, the British police, and the American Embassy for doing the 'dirty work' of the 'hunters of heresy' in Washington, this after British publishers had been approached for facts and figures about Lattimore's publications in Britain.⁶⁵ The furore died down quickly after the Home Office promised MPs that greater discretion would be used in the future, but the fact that the FO has indefinitely retained most of the file relating to this case, shows that perhaps then, as now, the main worry was to prevent embarrassments.⁶⁶

That avoiding potential Anglo-American embarrassments was at least as important as British traditions of tolerance could be attested to in the case of Dr. Joseph Cort, a young American physiologist at Birmingham University, who was refused in early 1954 a new work permit and extension of his stay in Britain after the Home Office had been informed that Cort was wanted in the United States to answer questions about his membership of the Communist Party and his alleged 'dodging' of military service. The case had many legal complexities regarding both American and British law; but it is clear why the Government felt it could not grant to Cort the status of a political 'refugee' sought by the many Labour MPs, led by Tony Benn, pleading on his behalf.⁶⁷ The award of political 'asylum' was reserved for aliens from behind the Iron Curtain; and Maxwell-Fyfe explained in the Cabinet meetings dealing with the issue that an official action of the British Government implying that the United States was a land where 'political persecution' was carried out, would result in 'serious damage to Anglo-American relations'.⁶⁸

Preventing such 'damage' was also a paramount consideration when the rights and civil liberties of a British MP were concerned. In March 1953, the State Department denied Sydney Silverman a visa to the United States, where he had intended to press for a reprieve for the atomic spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. Sixty-nine MPs, mostly Labour but also including the staunch Liberal Atlanticist Joe Grimond, signed a Motion of protest, but Eden claimed that he had made 'representations' which were not 'entirely successful.'⁶⁹ This in fact was not 'entirely' true. In a recent visit in Washington, Eden was told that Silverman would be given a visa if the Foreign Secretary would be willing to say that Silverman's visit was vital to the maintenance of good relations, which he would not. However, instead of informing the House about his unwillingness to do so, Eden preferred to inform the Cabinet that he was about to make a false statement in Parliament.⁷⁰

The Government, however, could truly do nothing about the American anti-Communist measure which most directly infringed on British pride and dignity. This was the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 - passed by Congress despite Truman's veto and Eisenhower's open disapproval - which provided for a wide range of quota restrictions and screening procedures for immigrants and visitors. 'A scandalous piece of illiberalism in flat repudiation of every decent tradition in American history...too much like what happens behind the other curtain', exploded the Manchester Guardian, advising as 'a just retaliation' putting 'every American visitor...through an interrogation by ham-handed officials.'⁷¹ When the Act first came into operation in December 1952, the main focus for the storm of protest which erupted in Britain was the provision to 'screen' British seamen entering American ports. '[W]hy not barge right into our

homes to certify us free from all political infection?', roared the popular Daily Mirror columnist Cassandra at this American insult to the sailors of the greatest seafaring nation of the world.⁷² The little-regarded and humble Note of Protest submitted by the Foreign Office was not going to soothe such indignation.⁷³ But luckily for those wishing to avoid Anglo-American quarrels, the National Union of Seamen, one of the most Right-wing unions of the TUC at the time, made initial protests but soon found 'nothing objectionable' in the Act and was determined to publicize equally the harsh treatment in East European ports.⁷⁴ Protests in Parliament, however, about American officials asking British seamen if they supported the Queen, or which political Party they had voted for at the last Election, did not disappear as quickly.⁷⁵ Even less did the bitter complaints over the next few years - Tory peers privately to the FO and Labour MPs on the backbenches - about the humiliating and 'messy' business of finger-printing required to get an American visa.⁷⁶ 'It has always been difficult to explain to Americans', Tosco Fyvel summed up the British response to the McCarran Act in the New Leader, 'that such incidents are far more potent - many times more potent - in creating "anti-Americanism" than articles in small circulation left-wing journals which the majority of British citizens do not even know by name.'⁷⁷

iii

Probably the harsh words said about the United States by others, rather than his own silence, kept Aneurin Bevan relatively out of the Anglo-American limelight during 1953. His presence on the Front Bench, and many trips abroad, ensured

relative calmness in the PLP and a tense peace within the Labour Party only disturbed occasionally by a Tribune attack on a Trade Union leader⁷⁸ Tribune had been re-launched in September 1952 with a bolder style and layout but even the TUC bosses were less of a target than the Tories at home, and the Americans abroad. The first issue with the new format - a 'Declaration of Independence': 'WE DON'T WANT THOSE DOLLARS'⁷⁹ - gave a good taste of front-page headlines to come such as: 'CHURCHILL'S FAILURE WITH UNITED STATES', 'THIS IS NOT OUR WAR!', 'NOT GOOD ENOUGH MR. PRESIDENT', 'MUST WE LEAVE PEACE TO THE PYGMIES?'⁸⁰ In the Bevanite crusade against the official Labour Party support (from February 1954) of German Rearmament - constantly urged by Dulles - Tribune was not loathe to exploit popular sentiment by portraying Konrad Adenaur's Western Germany as a postwar revival of German Nazism⁸¹. The Americans, who had not only released Nazi war criminals such as the Ruhr industrialist Krupp, but also restored his fortune, were depicted in almost equally sinister terms as the convivial benefactors of former Nazis.⁸²

German rearmament was an emotive issue that split the Party in half but it was American foreign policy that was always the greatest source of immediate anxiety. In January 1954, Dulles announced the doctrine of 'massive and instant retaliation'. This was widely interpreted as signifying that the United States intended to resist future aggression with bombs, even atom bombs, instead of troops. While a public debate was in progress about the exact meaning of the policy - criticized as sharply in the United States as on the British Left⁸³ - it was revealed that the Americans had exploded a Hydrogen bomb on the Bikini Islands. Evidence that the fall-out had covered a much greater area than the scientists had predicted, affecting the

crew of a Japanese fishing boat 80 miles from the test-site, focused public attention urgently on the potential horrors of the thermo-nuclear age. As newspaper front pages became covered with menacing pictures of mushroom clouds, Attlee made a strong speech in the House on April 5th in which he urged an immediate high-level conference to allay global fears. Churchill, however, in a partisan reply to Attlee - in fact more a response to the Labour Left's usual accusations that he had failed to secure atomic co-operation and consultation from the Americans - blamed the 'Socialist Government' for abandoning his own wartime agreements on atomic information with Roosevelt. By apparently suggesting that Britain had been deprived by the Americans of its atomic birth right, Churchill only aggravated the public mood of displeasure with the American H-bomb testing which Attlee and the Labour Party had captured. 'We do not want to be anti-American...', John Strachey explained, 'what we want is to be pro-human.'⁸⁴

The next Big Bang, however, exploded in the PLP a fortnight later, detonated by Aneurin Bevan whose unexpected resignation from the Front Bench, after an open clash with Attlee in Parliament, threw the Labour party back into turmoil. As in April 1951, the issue at stake was a British 'surrender to American pressure', this time regarding plans to establish something like NATO for South-East Asia, where the French were losing their seven-year war in Indo-China despite substantial American aid and despite severe American threats to the Chinese who supported the communist insurgents.

In a front-page Tribune article which followed his resignation - dramatically headlined 'AMERICA MUST BE TOLD: YOU GO IT ALONE' - Bevan called on Britain to refuse to join a 'counter-revolutionary' alliance to block Asian

‘progress’ and defend the extension abroad of ‘American social, political and economic values’ Yet how to resist the pressure of the Americans? Only by being prepared to ‘break’ with them if they do not ‘adjust’ their policies, he concluded.⁸⁵ It is interesting to note, however, that in a Daily Mirror article published four days before his resignation, Bevan had already questioned the Anglo-American Cold War alliance, by referring to the most powerful symbol of Britain’s dependent status in it, suggesting that the ‘time will soon come, if indeed it has already not arrived, to inform America that the presence of American military personnel in these islands is intolerable if our policies no longer march together.’⁸⁶ For the first time Bevan was proposing that Britain should even threaten to break-up the Atlantic alliance, although later in the year he insisted this was not a call to send ‘the Americans back home’ - as Churchill who called him an ‘evil counsellor’ had suggested - but an extended version of the old Bevanite essay on public diplomacy and the folly of giving allies the impression that ‘you are bound to agree with them no matter what they say.’⁸⁷

Bevan’s attacks on American Far Eastern policy, and his mention of a possible withdrawal of the bases, gave rise to fresh denunciations of his ‘renewed anti-Americanism’ from the Conservatives, and from the Labour Right-wing.⁸⁸ His call to resist American coercion, however, was exactly what Anthony Eden was already doing - without the public hectoring Bevan had suggested - by opposing the more impetuous proposals of Dulles for intervention in Indo-China, and then steering at Geneva a temporary settlement partitioning Vietnam into North and South, which was regarded as a personal triumph for the British Foreign Secretary.⁸⁹ Some of the most torrid transatlantic times since the end of the war passed before the crisis

was over, with American accusations of British 'appeasement' and British fears that H-bombs might be dropped on China. In a much-talked-about Gallup opinion poll in late April, only 37 per cent approved of American foreign policy while 40 per cent disapproved.⁹⁰ In Tribune Michael Foot exposed the 'WASHINGTON WAR PARTY' led by Vice-President Richard Nixon and Admiral Arthur Radford, Chairman of the American Joint Chiefs of Staff. 'Is it anti-American', he asked, 'to expose the deadly peril for all mankind which flows from. .American policy?', and indeed, even The Economist, while declaring that 'this journal will not be accused by anyone of anti-Americanism', deeply deplored too the 'wild and irresponsible talk in Washington.'⁹¹

Furthermore, it was Attlee, not Bevan, who had become the leading critic in Britain of American Far Eastern policy. In July 1954, in a speech which was ungraciously described by Churchill as 'one long whine of criticism towards the United States', Attlee drew an historical parallel between the Chinese and American revolutions.⁹² In August, he led a Party delegation to China (via Moscow), including Bevan among others, that captivated the imagination of the Party but also provoked great hostility in the United States.⁹³ When tension flared up again in the Far East in January 1955, this time over the off-shore Chinese islands of Quemoy and Matsu, Attlee boldly asserted that by supporting Chiang Kai-shek, the Americans were intervening in a Chinese 'civil war'.⁹⁴ In an outspoken interview in the Daily Herald, he vitiated the Administration's claim that Formosa belonged to an 'island defence ring' essential to American security. Besides being made redundant by the H-bomb, this policy was a 'disturbing' sanction for 'other' Governments to occupy and control foreign countries and not

‘an appropriate line’ for the ‘modern age’⁹⁵ Attlee seemed to be suggesting that the Americans were behaving towards China like a domineering imperialist power, a charge which when made by the Labour Left he himself had contested in the past.⁹⁶

Attlee, in short, had stolen the Bevanite clothes on this issue, thereby angering a ‘fair number’ of his colleagues who were critical of American policy, the American Embassy was informed, but also of their Labour Party leader’s ‘intemperate and destructive remarks’.⁹⁷ It was always Bevan, however who retained most of the attention and wrath of the Atlanticists in the Labour Party. During the annual Party conference at Scarborough in October 1954, he made a bitter attack on the leadership in a Tribune rally⁹⁸; and in the conference hall itself serious Bevanite challenges to the NEC’s support for the South East Asian Defence Treaty (SEATO) and German rearmament were almost carried, the latter defeated by only the narrowest margins⁹⁹ ‘Anti-Americanism like anti-Germanism’, Sam Watson, leader of the Durham miners and Gaitskell’s close ally warned from the platform, ‘can be just as big a phobia as Hitler developed in relation to the Jewish problem’.¹⁰⁰

iv

In the early 1950s, in particular after the Morecambe conference, the Right-wing in the PLP and trade unions missed no opportunity to repudiate the ‘anti-Americanism’ of the Party’s Left-wing, and to publicly re-affirm their own commitment to the Atlantic alliance.¹⁰¹ The Right-wing bosses who dominated the

TUC became, in fact, the most conspicuous and eager Atlanticists in British politics, associating themselves with every public manifestation of Atlanticism.¹⁰² Gaitskell, however, was aware that the attitudes of many of the Party rank and file were not the same as those of the leadership on this issue. He believed that in the early postwar years the arguments of the Left-wing were flattened by Bevin's prestige and personality, instead of being answered. And Gaitskell therefore urged an 'energetic campaign' to 're-educate' Party opinion about the United States in order to dampen the 'the flames of anti-Americanism.'¹⁰³

Gaitskell, however, was well aware that this quest was not made easier by the influence of the Labour Left in the independent socialist and 'Labour-supporting' press. Bevanite attacks on American foreign policy and other aspects of American life were read by the rank and file on a weekly basis in Tribune, and carried into other smart intellectual circles by the NS&N, which was 'broadly "pro-Bevanite"', in the words of Kingsley Martin.¹⁰⁴ Richard Crossman also launched his weekly thunderbolts to a much wider audience in the Sunday Pictorial and Tom Driberg attacked the United States so vehemently and frequently in his column in Reynolds News that an angry Hugh Dalton wrote in his diary that he often felt like applying for an American naturalization certificate.¹⁰⁵ Even the Party's loyal and semi-official Daily Herald carried a regular column from Michael Foot¹⁰⁶, and increasingly began to distress the Labour Right-wing. The Daily Herald's more leftish tone after Sydney Elliott became editor in early 1954 - for example the role it played in the outburst of indignation over American H-bomb testing¹⁰⁷ - soon brought Gaitskell secretly to ask trade union bosses to apply correcting pressure on

the newspaper that was becoming 'anti-American and pro-Russian on every possible occasion' ¹⁰⁸

The Labour Right-wing and its powerful trade union allies did not spend all their energies, however, on trying to gag the Left-wing, but also tried to find their own avenues of expression. There were, of course, Transport House outlets such as the monthly Fact, the only official publication of the Labour Party sold at bookshops (circulation: 20,000), where Hugh Gaitskell and Denis Healey attempted to explain the problems in Anglo-American relations but also to highlight the fundamental peacefulness and idealism guiding the Americans in world affairs. ¹⁰⁹ Yet this was clearly not enough and support for non official publications to influence opinion was one of the main preoccupations of Gaitskell and his allies. Until he was elected leader in 1955, Gaitskell acted, for example, as the Treasurer of Friends of Socialist Commentary, set up to assist with the help of his contacts in the trade unions the finances of the small-circulating monthly ¹¹⁰

Gaitskell was also involved in talks in 1952 to buy Forward or The Spectator, to add a weekly voice to the Labour Right-wing. ¹¹¹ In early 1956, after much financial misery and changes of editorship, Forward was indeed sold by its board to Gaitskell's trade union allies, who intended to transform it into the Labour Right-wing's rival to Tribune. The costs were helped by an inflated expenses cheque to the sum of \$3,000, given to Gaitskell during an American trip by his host David Dubinsky of the New York Garment Workers union ¹¹² However, the financial misfortune of Forward continued, despite the appointment as editor of Francis Williams, an experienced ex-editor of the Daily Herald and Attlee's press officer at No. 10 Downing Street, and despite the decision to relaunch the weekly in London

in order to target a national audience. Forward was finally closed in 1960. The fortunes and future of The Spectator were, of course, much happier and though it never became a Labour or socialist weekly, from the mid-1950s, under the editorship of the new proprietor Ian Gilmour, it propagated such a mildly-Conservative outlook that even Labour Party members could happily associate with it, as Roy Jenkins, who became a regular contributor, later recalled.¹¹³

By that time, however, the Labour Right-wingers had found another enduring, influential, and ultimately controversial home in Encounter, the monthly founded in 1953 by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which, as is now well known, was secretly funded by the CIA. Established in 1950, the Congress was composed of American and European liberal-minded Cold Warriors committed to the belligerent intellectual defence of Western democratic values.¹¹⁴ From its inception Encounter was under fire, as the literary critic David Daiches wrote in the NS&N in 1955, 'because it was so obviously subsidised and people wanted to know by whom, and who laid down its "line"'.¹¹⁵ The editors Stephen Spender and Irving Kristol responded by claiming their independence¹¹⁶; but, in fact, they were at the same time under heavy pressure from their Congress pay-masters, who claimed Encounter was not doing all it could to dispel British prejudices about American culture, and in particular to counter the political prejudice found in the Labour Party and the pages of the NS&N, the *bête noire* of all Atlanticist intellectuals¹¹⁷ Still, in Encounter and other Congress activities, an Atlanticist centre consisting of American and British intellectuals, many of whom belonged to the Labour Right-wing, found an effective meeting place. The British Labour Party 'delegation' to

the world-wide conference in 1955 of the Congress in Milan included among others Gaitskell, Healey, Jenkins, Crosland and Richard Crossman.

At Milan, moreover, the Labour Party intellectuals could not only discuss the Communist danger but also exchange ideas with North American counterparts such as John Kenneth Galbraith and Michael Polanyi about the desired extent of State intervention in the market and the 'false' dichotomy between 'socialism' and 'capitalism.'¹¹⁸ It was this sort of transatlantic debate which prepared the ground on the British side for Anthony Crosland, the most radical of Gaitskellite revisionists, who in the 1950s started to borrow ideas and examples from the United States in order to show that the main goal of socialism in the postwar affluent society should be 'social equality' rather than public ownership.¹¹⁹ In his influential book, The Future of Socialism, substantial parts of which were published in Encounter in 1956, Crosland, inevitably for a thinker who looked upon the United States as a socio-economic model as well as an ally, wasted no words in castigating 'anti-Americanism' as

an almost universal left-wing neurosis, springing from a natural resentment at the transfer of power from London to Washington combined with the need to find some new and powerful scapegoat to replace the capitalists at home, their utility in this role being much diminished under full employment and the welfare state.¹²⁰

Crosland made it quite clear that this 'left-wing neurosis' was one of the most 'obvious symptoms' of the Bevanite dispute, a dispute which in early 1955 seemed to be leading the Labour Party to a new crisis. Bevan followed a quiet few months after Scarborough with a fresh burst of activity. After the PLP rejected his demand

for immediate talks with the Russians before proceeding with German rearmament, he put down an independent Motion on the issue which caused an uproar by attracting more than 100 signatures. In March, in the debate on the Defence White Paper announcing that Britain too would produce H-bombs Bevan taunted Churchill by suggesting - wrongly - that the Americans, at whose 'mercy' he had placed Britain, would not permit him to meet the Russians as he wanted ¹²¹

However, after his usual swipe at Churchill's subservience to the United States, Bevan suddenly began to badger his own Front Bench, impertinently demanding 'clear assurances' that Labour was against the 'first use' of nuclear weapons. ¹²²

Bevan's complete disregard for political propriety resulted in an attempt of the Right-wing to expel him from the Party and finally crush Bevanism which, as Gaitskell told Crossman at the time, was only a 'conspiracy to seize the leadership for Aneurin Bevan.' ¹²³ His allies in Grosvenor Square - the Labor attaché Joe Godson participated in meetings to plan the expulsion ¹²⁴ - were even less generous. Bevan's motivation had become 'increasingly psychological, if not pathological', suggested one Embassy official, 'the explanation of his recent actions seem to be more a matter of Freudian than political analysis - that is, an acute frustration complex arising from his family background and his unsatisfied ambition.' ¹²⁵ But it was the efforts to expel Bevan that were frustrated in the end. Attlee, who realized the divisive effect such a move would have on the Party, finally moved against expulsion and persuaded the Executive to vote (narrowly) for a compromise enabling Bevan to apologize and make peace ¹²⁶

A week later Anthony Eden succeeded Churchill as Prime Minister and fully exploited the recent show of division in the Labour ranks, by calling an election for

late May. With the Tories seeming to be well in command, the outstanding feature of the 1955 campaign was apathy. There was only little discussion of foreign affairs; the horrors of the H-bomb proved to be of less interest to the electorate than both parties had perceived; and the Labour Party demand for a high-level conference was pre-empted by an American invitation, accepted by the Russians, for new 'Big Four Talks.'¹²⁷ The sudden conversion of the United States to the idea of talks provided the main theme for Bevan's final speech of the campaign. This was a 'manoeuvre' of 'Mr. Foster Dulles', Bevan claimed, to ensure the return of a Conservative Government 'The Tory Party', he continued, 'has now become a conveyor belt, conveying American pressure on the British people - a sort of party of political gigolos, kept by the Americans, having policies suggested by the Americans in order... that there might be the right sort of Government that suits Wall Street in No. 10 Downing Street.'¹²⁸ Aided by the rising standard of living and voter apathy more than by any machinations of Dulles, the Conservatives won the election by a much increased majority, returning 344 MPs to Labour's 277.

Six months later Attlee retired after twenty years as leader and Gaitskell was elected by the PLP as his successor. Bevan, however, had come a respectable second and his appointment by a reluctant Gaitskell as Shadow minister on Colonial affairs opened the way to the closer co-operation they established during the Suez crisis and after.

Analysing in Socialist Commentary the reasons for the 1955 election defeat, Gaitskell thought that the single most important factor behind the decline of the Labour vote was the maintenance of full employment by the Tories and the general feeling that 'things were better.' Behind all this, he noted, there were signs of 'something else - of which we should do well to take note.' In 'the last year or two', Gaitskell found, 'the people' were beginning to concentrate on their own material advancement.

No doubt it has been stimulated by the end of post-war austerity, TV, new gadgets like refrigerators and washing machines, the glossy magazines with their special appeal to women, and even the flood of new cars on the home market. Call it if you like a growing Americanization of outlook. I believe it's there, and it's no good to moan about it - apart from the fact that moaning, when it comes from better-off people enjoying high living standards themselves, seems to me rather odiously hypocritical.¹²⁹

On Gaitskell's mind seemed to have been the first signs of the postwar affluent society, a socio-economic development in which commercial and cultural American influences played a conspicuous and important role, and where hostility towards what the United States had on offer to the world was often more deep-rooted than in the case of many of the ephemeral outbursts over American foreign policy. The 'moaning' about 'Americanization' Gaitskell had detected was not only the hostile reaction of Britain's upper and middle classes, not least those who were Labour Party supporters, to the consumer culture which spread to lower income groups

some of their former privileges, but also to a foreign influence which threatened to undermine their hold over the nation's culture ¹³⁰

Hollywood films had previously been the main agent of the American way of life in Britain, and as such the focus for the nation's alarmed moralists and guardians of culture. In the 1950s, 'commercial films' still caused worry, which one Labour MP expressed, for being 'saturated with the materialism of the United States of America, which gives the children the wrong idea of what are the best values in life'¹³¹; but the episode which canalized all the objections to the influences that were flowing across the Atlantic was fought around the introduction of commercial television. The older influence of Hollywood, Christopher Mayhew warned, would be nothing compared to 'all this imported American stuff', which when broadcast 'evening after evening, in millions of British homes' would have 'a devastating effect on British culture and the British way of life.'¹³²

The Conservative Government's decision to break the BBC's monopoly and introduce a competing television service, financed by advertising, rocked British political life for nearly three years. Churchill, himself undecided, questioned in March 1954 the scale of values that had led the House of Commons to devote two days to the television debate but only one to the H-Bomb.¹³³ His Cabinet and Party, however, were themselves split by a decision that deeply disturbed many Conservative strongholds in the Churches and in teacher and parent organizations. At Westminster, Labour MPs and Tory (and Liberal) grandees did everything to obstruct what was seen by some as the attempts of a small profit-seeking 'pressure group' in the Conservative Party to force commercial television on the nation.¹³⁴ Some of Labour's objections to commercial television were based on the fear that

it would extend into broadcasting the political influence of Tory-supporting press barons, but what seemed paramount was the old paternalist concern that mass communications should be used to educate and enlighten, not to provide 'cheap' entertainment in order to create a mass audience for advertisers.¹³⁵ Not many in the Party seemed interested as was Richard Crossman in the fact that far more Tory voters objected to commercial television than Labour voters who did not care much about the whole issue.¹³⁶ Herbert Morrison was much more representative of Labour opinion at Westminster in describing the television debate as 'perhaps one of the most important, if not the most important, debates we have had since the war. An enormous amount depends upon it as to the future of our country, the thinking of the people and the standard of culture of the people.'¹³⁷

Whether American commercial broadcasting practices in the present were what Britain could expect in the future, was one of the main bones of contention; but there was hardly any disagreement that these were bad and undesirable in Britain. Only a few supporters of advertising tried to extol the virtues of American television¹³⁸, a more common argument was that it was unfair to use American television as an example because the Americans were less 'mature and sophisticated people' whose 'taste' and cultural standards were very different.¹³⁹ Opponents of commercial television claimed, however, that 'American TV is horrible not because it is run by Americans but because it is dominated by commercial motives'¹⁴⁰

Any British evidence still needed on the level of these American standards was supplied during the Coronation, which the BBC broadcaster Richard Dimbleby thought showed the Americans - 'a race of such vitality but so lacking in tradition'

- that 'they must wait a thousand years before they can show the world anything so significant or so lovely.'¹⁴¹ While BBC prestige soared due to the majestic way that it presented the ceremony, disturbing reports were received that American television companies had broken their promises and defiled the 'lovely' ceremony on their screens with advertisements. interrupt ng the Communion to advertise "Pepperel's Bed Sheets", cars (the "Queen of the Road"), soap, salad oil and deodorant. Yet even this storm of protest was nothing compared to the wave of horror which swept Britain when it was learnt that the 'charismatic chimpanzee' - J. Fred Muggs - had appeared during the Communion in an NBC programme and was solemnly asked: 'Do they have a Coronation where you come from?' ¹⁴²

Within days a National Television Council (well-planned in advance) was launched on the wave of public anger 'to resist' Government plans in what was the most impressive all-Party effort of 'the Establishment' - a term first used two years later - to conserve the cultural *status quo* in the face of the onslaught of subversive 'American' forces.¹⁴³ Its moving spirit, Labour MP Christopher Mayhew, stated its policy in a pamphlet, Dear Viewer, which sold 60,000 copies and rehearsed all the arguments that would be heard over and over again in the following year about the pernicious effects of 'American' capital and culture.¹⁴⁴ Behind the campaign to introduce commercial television, Mayhew claimed, were profit-seeking American-controlled advertising agencies, if they succeeded British television would 'qu ckly become Americanised' by the frequent showing of 'recorded American programmes by commercial firms who have American interests', local production would also have to conform to American 'taste', and British children would be

exposed to the crime and violence which characterized American television and had already infuriated helpless American parents ¹⁴⁵

It was indeed a triumph of the opponents of Advertising on the Air that they made such a nightmare of the prospects of 'Americanization' - in both form and content - that almost everything in the Television Bill finally adopted, Salisbury promised the worried Lords, was designed to make British commercial television as different as possible from the American model.¹⁴⁶ The American system of direct sponsoring in which the advertiser had control over the content of the programme was completely rejected; and an Independent Television Authority (ITA) controlled by a high-minded Board of Governors was created to supervise the restrictions on 'spot' advertising and the conditions for moral decency and political impartiality.¹⁴⁷ There was still the 'danger', discussed by the Cabinet, that the commercial service might become 'Americanised' by 'cheap and popular American films' which had already earned their production costs in the American market, but the suggestions to impose a quota was regarded as technically too complicated and the Bill, after some slight amending in Parliament, obliged the operators only to ensure that a 'proper proportion' of programmes were of 'British origin and performance.'¹⁴⁸ Even these safeguards, however, did not satisfy many Labour MPs and Tory Peers, who during the long and stormy passage of the Television Bill through Parliament from March to July 1954 fought tooth and nail against what Mayhew called 'the menace of the impact of Americanism which will come through this Bill.'¹⁴⁹

What is striking, however, is that in all the television debates, in stark contrast to the equally passionate debates on foreign policy in these years, hardly anybody seemed to be concerned that 'Americanism' was described as such a 'menace', or

that the adjective 'American' was always used to summon such negative associations. Lord Simon, an opponent of commercial television, took care to note during one heated debate in the Lords that his views on the matter 'were not a reflection on the American people, but on the system'¹⁵⁰, Lord Simonds, speaking for the Government as Lord Chancellor, claimed that to suggest 'when it is so terribly important to preserve good relations .that the American nation is debauched by its system of television' was not only 'the grossest possible libel' but 'a terribly unwise thing to say.'¹⁵¹ But that was all. There were none of the accusations of 'anti-Americanism' which littered debates on foreign policy, probably because both sides seemed basically to agree that this kind of 'American' influence was a negative and unwanted thing. Only once, when Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe explained in June 1952 that the British would handle advertising with taste, being in the first place 'a much more mature and sophisticated people', did Herbert Morrison point out to the Tory Home Minister that all this 'sounds like anti-Americanism'¹⁵², but then he himself went on to forecast that advertising would debase moral and cultural standards and introduce 'that very Americanism about which the Home Secretary seemed to be apprehensive '¹⁵³

This general agreement among these loyal supporters of the Atlantic alliance that such 'Americanism' was a bad thing, indicating a complete contradiction between political and cultural attitudes towards American postwar influence, was commented upon in an indirect way by J.B. Priestley. No admirer of American foreign policy or mass culture, Priestley himself awaited 'with terror the arrival of those monsters from outer space - the American-inspired TV programmes '¹⁵⁴ However, Gaitskell's observation that there was a 'growing Americanisation of

outlook' in Britain was out of date Priestley commented in July 1955, because a 'new society' had emerged in Britain which had to be given some new name 'if only in order to stop calling it American' ¹⁵⁵ *Admass*, he announced in Journey Down a Rainbow, first published later that year, was his name for the new mass society, organized around consumer culture, which first appeared in the United States in the interwar years, and was established now in Britain too ¹⁵⁶ Most reviewers of the book, Priestley complained in an article in the NS&N, assumed wrongly it was 'yet another attack upon America' which would 'add to my reputation, built over a quarter of a century, as an anti-American.' But 'who is anti-American?' Priestley asked, and his thoughts on the subject are worth quoting at some length. 'There are people here', he claimed,

who are never accused of being anti-American, who are praised over there for their friendship. And many of these are the very people who secretly loathe the place and detest its people, who would not care a rap if tomorrow the Atlantic and Pacific oceans met above Kansas City. They merely go whoring after American wealth and power. So long as they can use the Americans, they will contrive to put up with them. What they say in public, when they are wanting something America can give them, is very different from what they say in private, as these battered ears can testify

The Americans, unfortunately, did not realize who their 'true friends were', Priestley thought. They discussed over and over again 'anti-American' reputations founded on dislike of American political attitudes and foreign policy, 'themselves equally severely criticized by a host of Americans', instead of focusing on those

who detest the country, the people, the whole American idea, who wish the War of Independence had been lost or that Lee had finally defeated Grant, who sneer at American customs, habits, manners, accents, who go out of their way to avoid meeting Americans, who find nothing to admire in anything that comes from such a people, who in their heart of hearts regard America and Americans as the enemy. This is to be genuinely anti-American. And in London, Paris, Rome, and elsewhere, I have met the haters of America (and some distinguished members of my profession were among them); but...I never remember seeing one of them described in the American press as being anti-American. The bricks are always being thrown in the wrong direction.

As to his own attitude, nowhere were the often contradictory political and cultural attitudes towards the United States of the British Left so clearly and forcefully presented. 'I have actually spent', Priestley declared,

more time in America than I have in any country except England, more than I have in Scotland, Wales, Ireland. I have more friends in America than I have in any country except England. ... I have now an affection for it, and that is why I do not hesitate to criticize it. When I meet a friend I assume he would prefer my honest opinion to a vote of thanks. There is much in American life I do not like. But if I denounce *Admass* .. that is not because it is largely American in origin and I long to have another crack at the Yanks. I do it because I believe the *Admass* system to be unworthy of the place, the people, and the astonishingly revolutionary idea, unique in history, they represent. This is a nation that came out of a noble dream. If it

is anti-American to remember that dream, which so many pro-Americans seem to forget, then I am indeed anti-American.¹⁵⁷

The inference, of course, was that he was not. Was it indeed right that 'the Americans' labelled as 'anti-American' someone who had many American friends and who so admired the American landscape, American high culture and American political idealism? Reading Priestley's almost never-ending ranting about the extent of American cultural influence, 'the Americans' and less subjective readers might have been excused for throwing some bricks at least in his direction.¹⁵⁸

Yet for all his inability to acknowledge some of his own prejudices, Priestley offered, as is often the case, insight into the prejudices of others. As the television debates had shown, it was often the 'friends' of the United States, if that meant the Atlantic alliance, who harboured profound hostility to American morals, manners and culture. American mass culture - films, music, magazines and comics - had vocal critics also across the Atlantic, among various liberal-minded intellectuals and conservative-minded moralists; witness the parallel campaigns in Britain and in the United States in the early 1950s to ban the 'horror comics' trading in brutal scenes of crime and violence.¹⁵⁹ In Britain, however, where these comics were also known as 'American-style comics', American mass culture was under fire from Communists and Conservatives alike, not only for its 'debased' cultural standards and moral corruption of the young, but because this subversive socio-economic force represented also the cultural domination of Britain by a foreign power, which to complicate matters was also an important political and strategic ally.

Thus in September 1956, when the rock'n'roll revolution hit Britain and British teenagers began rioting in cinemas to the sound of Bill Haley's *Rock Around the*

*Clock*¹⁶⁰, the Daily Mail spelt out the faults of the new musical force rocking the nation. 'It is deplorable. It is tribal. And it is from America.'¹⁶¹ A month after, well into the Suez crisis, the boundaries between Conservative cultural and political hostility to American influence seemed to suddenly disappear, when Julian Amery lashed out at the Conservative Party conference at the 'rock 'n' roll' foreign policy of none other than that Presbyterian moralist - John Foster Dulles.¹⁶²

vi

Political enmity towards the United States within the Tory party did not emerge overnight. Since 1953, in fact, open abuse directed at American foreign policy was being sounded not only by the Labour Left but also by the imperialist die-hards on the right-wing of the Conservative Party, concerned about the threat posed to British interests by American commercial rivalry and anti-Colonial traditions. This was true especially in the Middle-East, where the 'Suez group' of Tory backbenchers cried foul at the American role in the events which led to the decision to evacuate the British garrison in the Suez Canal basin in 1954.¹⁶³ At the 1953 Conservative Conference at Margate, Julian Amery had already spoken in Bevanite fashion about the need to speak 'frankly' and 'resist the pressure of misguided friends' who had 'not borne themselves as allies should'.¹⁶⁴

The vitriolic attacks of Captain Waterhouse, Julian Amery and Enoch Powell on American plans to destroy the British Empire and eliminate the British from the Mediterranean basin for the sake of 'advancing American imperialism'¹⁶⁵ did not pass without mention on the Labour backbenches. For years the Tories had been

smugly accusing the Labour benches of being 'bitterly anti-American'; now there was an opportunity for Labour Party speakers to emphasize in which quarter of British political life such sentiments of prejudice and hostility were truly located. Enoch Powell sounded just like the Daily Worker on Anglo-American relations, pointed out the Left-winger Maurice Edelman ¹⁶⁶ Denis Healey, turning his anti-anti-American fire from his colleagues to the "Keep Right Group"¹⁶⁷, had no doubt that Enoch Powell's remarks on postwar American policy would 'surprise many on both sides of the Atlantic who believe that irrational anti-Americanism is a monopoly of the sectarians of the Left.'¹⁶⁸

There was, moreover, a general improvement of the British Left's opinion about the United States as Anthony Eden began the Premiership (which would end with such disaster at Suez). It was helped no doubt by the improvement in the international atmosphere. In July 1955, the first East-West Summit since Potsdam ended with no concrete results but the 'spirit of Geneva' generated much optimism about the possibility of finding ways to control the arms race. Eisenhower's new dedication to 'peaceful co-existence', despite the persistent doubts of the sulking Dulles, produced a foreign policy to which the British Left warmed Cold War attitudes seemed to be changing also on the American domestic front. It took the Left longer to accept that the rapid demise of McCarthy during 1954 meant also the end of the 'mode of thought' he represented, but by July 1955 the NS&N too admitted that 'the air of Washington' was 'miraculously' clearing and 'the oppressive cloud of McCarthyism is rolling away.'¹⁶⁹ The improvement of the American image was evident at the Labour Party Conference at Margate that year. A resolution (that was defeated) urging an independent foreign policy according to

‘socialist principles’ attracted more than a third of the votes cast, the full force of the Labour Left.¹⁷⁰ However, only relatively mild criticisms of the United States were made, such as on the issue of trade with China, and there was not even the usual militant motion demanding the removal of American bases.¹⁷¹

The Labour Left, of course, had no more liking than the Tories for American policies in the Middle East, where the American involvement in the setting up of the anti-Communist Baghdad Pact, signed in 1955 by Britain, Turkey and Iraq, was seen in *Tribune* as an ‘American-sponsored’ expression of Dulles’ ‘pactomania’.¹⁷² Even less did they like American oil interests operating in the region at Britain’s expense. The United States should understand, Aneurin Bevan explained in the House of Commons in March 1956 in a passage that would have made Ernest Bevin proud of him, that access to Middle Eastern oil was a British necessity: ‘American oil interests ought not to consider that it is a safe thing to play with British embarrassments in the Middle East in order to extend their own interests there.’ However, the occasion for the speech was the Government’s decision to deport the Greek-Cypriot leader Archbishop Makarios which had been criticized in the United States ‘I have been accused both inside the House and in newspapers in the last four or five years of poisoning Anglo-American relations’, Bevan attacked the decision to deport Makarios ‘If that had been my intention, which it never was’, he continued - drawing great cheers from the Labour benches - ‘I could never have succeeded better than hon. and right hon. Members opposite.’¹⁷³

Six months later, Tory resentment at Britain’s postwar domination and displacement by the United States, long-suppressed by the need for a Cold War alliance, forcefully erupted during the first stages of the Suez crisis. As it became

apparent that Eisenhower and Dulles would not support Eden's belligerent approach towards Egypt, the criticism still made on the Labour Left of American 'dollar dictatorship' in the Middle East was accompanied by an acknowledgement, sometimes grudging, mostly enthusiastic, of the role of Dulles in restraining Britain.¹⁷⁴ In contrast, public expressions of anger, hitherto heard only from the extremists of the Suez Group, were heard from across the Conservative Party and Press. Kingsley Martin felt he had been vindicated at long last. 'I have known for a long time that the real anti-Americans in this country are not, as American publicists love to say, the British Left, but Tory businessmen and politicians, who find American economic competition disturbing and American political policy exasperating.'¹⁷⁵ The rank and file of the Tory Party were consumed by 'bitter anti-Americanism', reported Tribune, and Dulles in particular roused such contempt at the Conservative Party conference in October that 'he was, uniquely, referred to without the "Mr."'¹⁷⁶

Such a profound Tory insult was nothing compared to the transatlantic hell which was let loose when the United States, refusing to support the British and French landing of troops at Port Said on November 5, forced a cease-fire on the following day. Towards the end of November more than 100 Tory backbenchers - angered by Eisenhower's insistence on British withdrawal and resentful at the visible ebbing away of Britain's power felt by every motorist pining for petrol - put down a Motion censuring the Americans for 'gravely endangering the Atlantic alliance', politely worded as possible but nevertheless immediately becoming known as the 'anti-American' motion¹⁷⁷ The most amazing attack, however, on 'the moral weakness and incapacity of the Americans' came from Lord Hailsham, a

crusader against commercial television and First Lord of the Admiralty during the crisis, who in a widely-reported speech to the Oxford Conservative Association, uttered a remarkable passage that turned on its head one of Churchill's favourite analogies for the Special Relationship.

You cannot make me anti-American. I am proof against anti-Americanism.

In an intimate and personal sense I am Anglo-American friendship, or at any rate one of the physical results of it. I cannot turn against America without turning against my own mother, and that I can never do. But there is one thing I must tell America: for the first time since the war, almost for the first time in my life, I have begun to find it hard to say that I am half-American, and still harder to say that I am proud of it.¹⁷⁸

In contrast, the Labour Party, despite the anger with the United States of some isolated elements on its Right-wing¹⁷⁹, was essentially united behind Hugh Gaitskell's staunch opposition to the Government's action in Suez, which entailed an earnest defence of American motives and behaviour¹⁸⁰ 'I have been more pro-American during the last month than I have been for a long time', confessed the pacifist Emrys Hughes, summing up the Suez experience of even some of the most extreme Left-wingers.¹⁸¹

The hostility emerging in Tory ranks towards the United States was given particular sharp treatment in Labour Party circles, the Daily Herald explaining to its readers that those die-hard Tories who 'hate America' had joined 'the extreme Left in a world of fantasy' where 'anti-Americanism' provided an escape from the 'reality' that Britain was a 'second-class Power in military and economic terms - which means that nobody has to subscribe to our mistakes. Least of all the

Yanks '182 Earlier in the decade, the Tories had persistently claimed that the Labour Party could only unite around hostility to Churchill and the United States, now Labour writers could claim that Tory leaders - recognizing that the only thing that united Tories, deeply split over of Suez, was their hatred of 'Gaitskell and all Americans' - hoped to use 'anti-American cement' to hold their Party together.¹⁸³ In Forward, Douglas Jay lambasted the 'anti-Americanism' of the Tories and Lord Hailsham which was the

oddest, silliest and shabbiest spectacle in British politics to-day... Nothing could be more absurd - and un-British - than a chorus of hysterical Tories working off their frustrated sense of guilt and humiliation over Suez in wild speeches and motions about the wickedness of the Americans. ... Even if you think Mr. Dulles tactless, the U.S. oil companies grasping, and the treatment of the negroes still reactionary, ask yourself: is it wise, patriotic, or honest to stir up hatred between the two countries, and abuse the U.S. for the blunders of our own Government?¹⁸⁴

The Labour Left, however, found other faults with the 'anti-American' motion and Hailsham's speech. 'There is nothing more inelegant - and ineffective - than the belated squeaking bark of a lap dog,' Michael Foot commented in Tribune on the 'anti-American Tories' ¹⁸⁵ They were 'anti-American for the wrong reason', Tom Driberg added in Reynolds News his own analysis of Conservative hostility, admitting that "premature anti-Americans" like himself derived 'a certain wry satisfaction from watching this immense convulsion in the West, this classic contradiction between rival imperialisms' ¹⁸⁶ Thus even during the Suez honeymoon between the Labour Party and the United States, ushered in by disgust

with Conservative Party attitudes to foreign affairs and the American allies, Labour Left-wingers lost nothing of that mixture of nationalist sentiment and socialist ideology which underpinned their own resentment at Britain's domination and displacement by the United States. He did not blame the Government 'one little bit' for taking an independent line of the United States, Bevan made clear in his first major speech on Suez, he only blamed the Tories for 'the action itself.'¹⁸⁷

In the previous five years, Aneurin Bevan and his followers had loudly expressed fear and anger every time American policies and anti-Communist domestic pressures threatened to drag Britain into a new World war, or seemed to be responsible for the failure to ease international tensions. These sentiments were widely held in Britain, in particular at the height of McCarthyism, but it was on the Labour Left that they were given additional impetus by its ideological prejudices and mistrust of American power. It was therefore the Labour Left that continued to be accused by Tories and Labour Right-wingers of 'anti-Americanism', mainly used in these years to indicate discomfort with the Atlantic alliance. However, the responses to American mass culture continued to indicate that there was much more to 'anti-Americanism' than simple disagreement with American foreign policy. There was much that even loyal Atlanticists could find wrong with American cultural influence; and Suez soon demonstrated that there was enough

'anti-Americanism' also on the British Right even where 'political' attitudes were concerned.

The Labour Right-wing led by Hugh Gaitskell had been seen during the Suez crisis to be the most passionately anti-anti-American element in British political life. Over the next months, Gaitskell and the Labour Right-wing were to persistently attack the 'anti-American motion' of the Conservatives as a thorn in the flesh of the Anglo-American alliance.¹⁸⁸ However, very soon the general outburst of Tory emotion during the Suez crisis was contained, despite lingering expressions of resentment at American perfidy and power by the Tory rank and file and a few bitter and isolated Tory MPs.¹⁸⁹ Under the Premiership of Harold Macmillan - yet another Tory Leader with an American mother - the Anglo-American alliance was re-established as the most important object of British foreign policy and object of Tory devotion.¹⁹⁰ At the same time, the Eisenhower Doctrine, announced in the immediate aftermath of Suez, renewed vocal criticism of American foreign policy from the Labour Left.¹⁹¹ And it was therefore the Left - openly questioning the motives behind American power and the wisdom of the Anglo-American alliance - that once again in the late 1950s, and beyond, would be the chief source of expression, in British political life, of the deep resentment at Britain's postwar domination and displacement by the United States.

Notes and References

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2. Colville, Fringes of Power, p. 662
3. Sunday Dispatch, 15/2 1953, p. 6; Sunday Pictorial, 8 2 1953, p. 1, Daily Herald, 4/2/1953, p. 4.
4. The Times, 28/1/1953, p. 6.
5. Epstein, Britain, p. 56, Fact, Vol. 11, No. 7 (July 1953), p. 4.
6. Tribune, 4/9/1953, p. 4.
7. The Manchester Guardian, 28/9/1953, p. 6; 2/10/1953, p. 6. H.C. Debates, Vol. 521, cols. 348-9 (25/11/1953); col. 935-8 (1/12/1953); 1778-82, (8/12/1953).
The Tory MP and E-SU member Cyril Osborne was made so upset by American accusations over China trade that he urged the Government to dispense with the 'humiliating' American aid. See H.C. Debates, Vol. 521, cols. 1805-6 (8/12/1953).
8. John W. Young, 'Cold War and Détente with Moscow' in John W. Young (ed.), The Foreign Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration 1951-1955 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1988), pp. 59-60
9. H.C. Debates, Vol. 515, cols. 897-8 (11/5/1953).
10. The possible influence of the Coronation was noted by the sceptics in The Economist, 16 5 1953, p. 417. See also Time, 25/5/1953, p. 28.
11. 77 per cent favoured such a conference as opposed to only 4 per cent who did not. 47 per cent believed it would succeed. See Gallup, International Polls, p. 300.
12. Berrington, Backbench Opinion, pp. 93-97
13. Tribune, 15 5 1953, pp. 1-2, Barbara Castle, H.C. Debates, Vol. 515, col. 996 (11 5 1953), NS&N, 16/5/1953, p. 568, Morgan (ed.), Backbench Diaries, p. 231; D. Donnelly, Letter to The Times, 18 5 1953, p. 9
14. H.C. Debates, Vol. 515, cols. 1061-1071 (11 5 1953)
15. Clifton Utley, The Listener, 21 5 1953, pp. 823-4, The New Republic, 8 6 1953, p. 6

16. Minute by C.G. Thornton, 22/5/1953. PRO, FO371/103495, AU1013 21.
17. Congressional Record, 13/5/1953, pp 4860-2; 14/4/1953, pp. 4909-12.
- 18 NS&N, 18/7/1953, pp. 61-2
19. Colville, Fringes of Power, p. 672; Tribune, 17/7/1953, p. 1.
20. FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol. 6, pp. 997-1002.
- 21 Salisbury to British Embassy in Washington, 27/9/1953 PRO, FO371 103518, AU1052/27.
22. Nigel Nicolson (ed), Harold Nicolson. Diaries and Letters, 1945-1962 (London: Collins, 1968), p. 243.
23. Tribune, 11/9/1953. p. 4.
24. Daily Herald, 15/5/1953, p. 2.
25. H.C. Debates, Vol. 518, cols. 1547-8 (30/7/1953).
26. The Times, 21/9/1953, p. 2.
27. Tribune, 18/9/1953, p. 5. See also Tribune, 4/9/1953, p 5
28. Harris, Attlee, p. 511.
29. Daily Telegraph, 26/9/53, p. 6; Time, 5/10/1953, p. 35; The Spectator, 22/1/1954, p. 87.
30. LPCR, 1953, pp. 149-151; See Michael Foot, 'Victory - Or Defeat?', Tribune, 9/10/1953, p. 4.; Healey feared that Churchill's initiative - which had greatly 'increased anti-American feeling in Britain and anti-British feeling in the United States' - would become an excuse for the Labour Party to 'dodge' German rearmament. See LPCR, 1953, p. 160; H C. Debates, Vol 520, cols 424-6 (5/11/1953).
- 31 LPCR, 1953, p 92; p 98.
32. LPCR, 1953, p. 150, pp. 157-9.
- 33 Ibid, p. 164.
- 34 For a bibliographical essay on the enormous body of literature on the subject, see M J. Heale, American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970 (Baltimore The John Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp 203-223
- 35 Richard H. Rovere, Senator Joe McCarthy (Harcourt: New York, 1959).

- 36 An exception was the Fascist leader Oswald Mosley who thought that McCarthy was the only American leader 'showing strength, character and direction'. Quoted in Time, 22/2/1954, p. 34.
37. News Chronicle, 27/2/1954, p. 1. The reactions in the British press to the tussle between McCarthy and the Administration were so severe in these weeks that the Ambassador Winthrop Aldrich sent a special report to Washington. See FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume 1, pp. 1548-51.
- 38 The Spectator, 23/7/1954, p. 102.
39. The Spectator, 5/3/1954, p. 252.
40. NS&N, 23/5/1953, pp. 597-598.
41. NS&N, 27/9/1952, p. 344; 6/3/1954, pp. 278-279.
42. Colie, Stuart Edgar, 'McCarthyism and Some European Images of America' (unpublished PhD thesis, Princeton University, 1963), p. 44.
43. *Ibid*, p. 52.
44. *Ibid*, p. 340; p. 507.
45. Driberg believed McCarthyism would wither away overnight if there was a real *détente*. See H.C. Debates, Vol. 522, col. 641 (17/12/1953).
- 46 In November 1952, the 'Slansky trial' in Prague, the greatest purge of a Communist leadership outside the Soviet Union, resulted in the conviction and hanging of 11 of the accused.
47. Tribune, 'NEGRO BOY MAKES HISTORY', 21/5/1954, p. 1.
48. Tribune, 21/5/1953, p. 3.
49. Peter Hennessy and Gail Brownfeld, 'Britain's Cold War Security Purge The Origins of Positive Vetting', The Historical Journal, Vol. 25, No. 4 (1982), pp. 965-73.
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- and intolerance', in Deniel Bell (ed), The Radical Right (New York Doubleday 1964), pp. 269-306; Mohoney, 'Civil Liberties', pp 53-100.
- 52 Karen Potter, 'British McCarthyism', in Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones and Andrew Lownie (eds), North American Spies (Edinburgh. Edinburgh University Press, 1991), p. 148 A public defence of American anti Communism was attempted only by Rebecca West in a series of articles in the Sunday Times, 22/3/1953, 29/3/1953,; 5/4/1953; 12/4/1953.
53. Sunday P ctorial, 13/8/1950, p. 7.
54. H.C. Debates, Vol. 443, cols. 503-4 (27/10 1947); The note was prepared by Miss C.E Ludlam of the North American Department, 23/10/1947. See PRO, CAB124 1102.
55. House of Lords Debates, Vol. 166, cols. 607-62 (29/3/1950).
56. Ibid, col 608.
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58. The Times, 12/10/1954, p. 8.
- 59 Mahoney, 'Civil Liberties', pp. 67-68.
- 60 Levy to Foot, 9/10/1952. Michael Foot papers, Museum of Labour History, Manchester, Tribune Office Correspondence, H-Z. In the 1956 Labour Party conference, Benn Levy moved a resolution (which was defeated) on civil liberties, in which he warned that labelling people as 'security risks' had become in the United States a weapon with which 'the Right seeks to intimidate the Left.' See LPCR, 1956, pp. 88-91.
- 61 George Wigg, H.C. Debates, Vol. 514, co s 201-202 (15 4 1953).
62. The Times, 20 5/1953, p 5, 21/5/1953, p 5; H C Debates, Vol 577, cols. 2064-5 (19 5 1954)
- 63 Ian Mikardo, H C. Debates, Vol. 518, cols 280-281 (22 10 1953).
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65. Manchester Guardian, 20/10 1954, p. 4

- 66 H.C. Debates, Vol. 531, cols 298-300 (28/10 1954); Vol. 532, cols. 1388 90 (11/11/1954); PRO, FO371/109154.
- 67 H.C. Debates, Vol. 529, cols. 47-8 (24 6/1954); cols 1507-16 (1/7/1954), cols. 2316-24 (8/7/1954); Vol. 530, cols. 941-68 (30/7/1954).
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- 70 Cabinet conclusions, 17/3/1953. PRO, CAB128/26.
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- 73 H.C. Debates: Vol. 510, col. 22 (20/1/1953).
- 74 National Union of Seamen Executive Council Minutes, 30/1/1953. Warwick University, Modern Records Centre, Mss.175/1/1/16.
75. H.C. Debates, Vol. 512, cols. 534-535 (5/3/1953).
76. Salisbury to Eden, 10/1/1953. FO371/103565, AU1821/13; H.C. Debates, Vol. 524, cols. 1721-4 (8/3/1954); Vol. 544, cols. 24-5 (18/7/1955); Vol. 545, col. 1474-5 (7/11/1955); Vol. 557, cols. 414-5 (25/7/1956); Vol. 570, col. 841-2 (20/5/1957).
77. New Leader, 23/2/1953, p. 8.
78. Campbell, Nye Bevan, p. 284-7.
79. Tribune, 26/9/1952, p. 1. It also stated: 'This is not a policy of anti-Americanism.'
- 80 Tribune, 26/12/1953; 6 2/1953; 24 4/1953; 17/7/1953.
- 81 Tribune, 8/1/1954, p. 2, 23/7/1954, p 6; 13/8/1954, p 1.
- 82 Tribune, 9/1/1951, pp 5-6, 22/8/1952, pp. 1-2. It was, in fact, an American decision, not British, to try Krupp in the first place in 1948 But in view of the considerable public interest in Krupp and his fortune, Churchill and Eden decided to make this publicly clear. See Cabinet conclusions, 1/10 1952. PRO, CAB128 25
- 83 Dean Acheson, wrote the NS&N, had 'exposed both [the new policy's] folly and its wickedness in language which, if employed by this journal, would have

- subjected us to the sternest rebukes on the grounds of anti-Americanism.' See 'Heads in the Atomic Sand', NS&N, 3/4/1954, p. 428.
- 84 H.C. Debates, Vol. 526, cols. 36-60; col. 65 (5/4/1954)
- 85 Tribune, 16/4/1954, pp. 1-2; 23/4/1954, pp. 1-2.
- 86 Daily Mirror, 9/4/1964, p. 7.
87. The Times, 11/10/1954, p. 4. Four months later, Bevan claimed again that the time had come to remove the American bases, which no longer protected Britain in the H-bomb era, but gave it the appearance of an 'occupied country' whose freedom of action was restricted 'with respect to America.' See Tribune, 22/2/1955, p. 1. But Richard Crossman heard that even Attlee believed at this stage that the bases should be removed because Britain was too vulnerable. See Morgan (ed.), Crossman Diaries, p. 383.
88. Notes on Current Politics (Conservative Research Department), 10/4/1954, p. 22; Denis Healey, New Republic, 3/5/1954, p. 5.
89. Robert Rhodes James, Anthony Eden (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), pp. 377-82.
90. News Chronicle, 30/4/1954, p. 1.
- 91 Tribune, 11/6/1954, p. 1; p. 4; The Economist, 8/5/1954, pp. 429-30. The American involvement in the overthrow of a Left-wing Government in Guatemala intending to confiscate property of the United Fruit Company, a 'sub-plot' of British anger in mid-1954, was looked upon with dismay in the FO just as on the Labour Left. See John W. Young, 'Great Britain's Latin American Dilemma: The Foreign Office and the Overthrow of "Communist" Guatemala, June 1954', The International History Review, Vol. 8, No. 4 (November 1986), pp. 573-592.
- 92 H.C. Debates, Vol. 530, cols. 487-8, col. 491 (14/7/1954).
- 93 Harris, Attlee, pp. 520-521.
- 94 H.C. Debates, Vol. 536, col. 159 (26/1/1955)
- 95 Daily Herald, 31/1/1955, p. 1. Attlee also called for the exile of Chiang and the neutralization of Formosa until its future would be decided by a plebiscite
- 96 H.C. Debates, Vol. 430, cols. 584 (18/11/1946); Time, 16/6/1952, p. 32.

97. London to State Department, 11/2/1955. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1955-59, Box 3183, 741.00/2-1155. The Embassy reckoned, however, that Attlee had since recognized that he exaggerated in his 'attack' on the United States, and indeed, Crossman's attempt to include Attlee's reference in the Daily Herald to the American 'defence ring' in an NEC resolution on Formosa was thwarted by Attlee himself. See Morgan (ed), Backbench Diaries, p. 388. See also report in The Times, 24/2/1955, p. 8.
- 98 Campbell, Nye Campbell, pp. 292-3.
99. The leadership only secured a narrow victory on German rearmament thanks to a last moment switch of vote by the small woodworkers Union. See Harrison, Trade Unions, pp. 228-9. A more militant motion calling for the removal of American bases from Britain was defeated by a much greater margin. See LPCR, 1954, pp. 76-7; p. 85; p. 89.
- 100 LPCR, 1954, p. 86.
- 101 Labour MPs such as Gordon Walker, Gaitskell and Healey, as well as trade union bosses such as Deakin and Watson, were conspicuous in Friends of Atlantic Union, a small 'all-party' organization launched in 1952. The Union, conceived and chaired by Sir Hartley Shawcross, propagated the creation of an Atlantic 'Community' by broadening NATO from a military pact into 'a more organic' political and economic association. See The Times, 9/7/1952, p. 7; NS&N, 19/7/1952, p. 57. In December 1952, 100 MPs signed a motion sponsored by the Parliamentary members of the Union (which included also Tories such as Lord John Hope and Ted Leather, and the Liberal Jo Grimond). The motion called for support of all measures to increase the 'popular understanding' of the aims and achievements of NATO. See A.C.E. Malcolm to E.C.R. Hadfield, 13/1/1953 PRO, INF12/704, P10331/271.
102. The General Council of the TUC decided to associate itself with a British Atlantic Committee which was set up in April 1953 to promote understanding of NATO and the Atlantic Community. See Report of the Proceedings at the 85th Annual Trade Union Congress, 1953, p. 201. Arthur Deakin, Tom Williamson, Will Lawther, and Sam Watson also signed a Declaration of Atlantic Unity published in October 1954 by a long list of politicians,

- businessmen and intellectuals, in Western Europe and North America. See The Times, 4/10/1954, p. 6. For a full list of signatories, see J. Miskin to Clark, 1/10 1954. William Clark papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Box 109, fols. 88-89; 159-165.
103. Hugh Gaitskell, 'Further Thoughts on Morecambe', The Spectator, 17/10/52, pp. 494-495. Roy Jenkins too emphasized in 1953 the need to re-educate 'the party's attitude to the Soviet Union, the United States of America, and their respective ideologies.' See Jenkins, The Pursuit of Progress, p. 37.
104. Martin to Cole, 21/11/1952. New Statesman papers, Editorial Correspondence, c. 1948-1952, A-G
105. Pimlott (ed), The Political Diaries, p. 623.
106. Michael Foot's wife, Jill Craigie, told Beaverbrook in December 1959, after having 'lived with such stories for years', that Gaitskell and his associates were putting tremendous pressure on the Daily Herald to end Foot's column. Jill Craigie to Beaverbrook, 31/12/1959. Beaverbrook papers, C/136.
107. Morgan (ed.), Backbench Diaries, p. 303.
108. Williams, Hugh Gaitskell, p. 320.
109. Hugh Gaitskell, 'Britain and America', Fact, Vol. 11, No 10 (October 1953), pp. 16-7; Denis Healey, 'Living with America', Fact, Vol. 12, No 7 (July 1954), pp. 4-6.
110. Haseler, The Gaitskellites, pp. 68-9; Williams, Hugh Gaitskell, p. 320.
111. Williams, Hugh Gaitskell, p. 320.
112. Carew, Labour, pp. 129-130.
113. Jenkins, A Life, pp. 117-118.
114. Peter Coleman, The Liberal Conspiracy The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe (New York: The Free Press, 1989).
115. NS&N, 5 3 1955, p. 315. Roy Jenkins, a regular contributor, vaguely understood at the time that Encounter was heavily subsidized by a Cincinnati gin distiller. See Jenkins, A Life, p. 118
116. Encounter Vol. 4, No. 5 (May 1955), p. 2
117. Coleman, The Liberal Conspiracy, p. 70-73

- 118 Ibid, pp. 109-110.
119. Stephen Brooke, 'Atlantic Crossing? American Views of Capitalism and British Socialist Thought, 1932-1962', Twentieth Century British History, Vol. 2, No 2 (1991), pp. 107-136. This did not mean that the Gaitskellite revisionists, in particular Gaitskell himself, did not criticize even the more progressive Americans for being too suspicious of state intervention. See Williams, Hugh Gaitskell, p. 513.
120. C.A.R. Crosland '...About Equality', Encounter, Vol. 7, No 1 (July 1956), p. 6. Encounter was the forum in which Crosland continued to publish the revisionist texts in which he argued the case for social welfare, equal distribution of wealth, and material progress on American lines, which was what 'the masses' seemed to want. See 'The Future of the Left', Encounter, Vol. 14, No. 3 (March 1960), pp. 3-12.
121. In July 1954, it was senior members of Cabinet led by Salisbury, who prevented Churchill from going to Moscow after Eisenhower had at last consented. See Young, 'Cold War', pp. 67-9.
122. H.C. Debates, Vol. 537, cols. 2115-2119; col 2176 (2/3/1955).
123. Morgan (ed.), Backbench Diaries, p. 410.
124. Williams (ed.), Gaitskell Diary, p. 384; p. 393; p. 398. Williams explains that Joe Godson was regarded as an American trade unionist rather than an Embassy official, an explanation that of course nobody on the Labour Left would rightly accept.
125. P. Rutter to State Department, 14/3/1955. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1955-59, Box 3183, 741.00/3-1455.
126. Campbell, Nye Bevan, p. 300.
127. David Butler, The British General Election of 1955 (London: Macmillan, 1955), p. 74.
128. The Times, 26 5 1955, p. 5. The Labour Right-winger Woodrow Wyatt, desperate about the seat at Grantham (which he lost), also said that he was 'not anti-American' but accused Eisenhower, who had 'no faith in top level talks', of interfering in the British election in order to help Eden. See Daily Mirror, 13/5/1955, p. 10.

129. Hugh Gaitskell, 'Understanding the Electorate', Socialist Commentary, July 1955, p. 205.
130. The real impact of affluence was felt, however, in the late 1950s and 1960s. Arthur Marwick, British Society Since 1945 (London: Penguin Books, 1990), chapter 7.
131. H.C. Debates, Vol. 527, col. 2317 (20/5/1954). Cinema attendance did not decline in Britain in the early 1950s as they had in the United States and the flow of dollars on 'Hollywood rubbish' still concerned MPs on both sides of the House. See H.C. Debates, Vol. 520, col. 1127 (22/11/1953); Vol. 535, col. 1256-7 (3/2/1955); Vol. 536, col. 181-2 (15/2/1955). The first full debate on the film industry since 1949 took place only in 1956, but the influence of Hollywood was still of course the main topic. See H.C. Debates, Vol. 548, cols. 1945-2034 (10/2/1956).
132. H.C. Debates, Vol. 529, col. 337-8 (22/6/1954).
133. The Times, 25/3/1954, p. 7; Churchill, who never forgave the BBC for keeping him off the air in the 1930s, was worried, however, about the opposition in Cabinet and the Party. He even thought at certain stages to allow a 'free vote'. See Anthony Seldon, Churchill's Indian Summer: The Conservative Government, 1951-1955 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), pp. 134-5; Ramsden, The Age of Churchill, pp. 252-4.
134. H.H. Wilson, Pressure Group: The Campaign for Commercial Television (London: Secker and Warburg, 1961)
135. This paternalism, usually less pronounced among Tories, was given a perfect expression by Lord Brand, a Tory member of the General Advisory Council of the BBC. See House of Lords Debates, Vol. 176, cols. 1381-2 (26 5/1952).
136. Morgan (ed), Backbench Diaries, p. 331. Crossman himself was not against some form of commercial television to add spice to the BBC. See Sunday Pictorial, 20 4 52, p. 2.
137. H.C. Debates, Vol. 522, col. 65 (14 12 1953)
138. H.C. Debates, Vol. 522, col. 47, col. 226 (15 12 1953) Another reason for praising American television was its evangelical role in filling up the Churches. In the following year its ability to take on McCarthy was also highlighted. See

- H C. Debates, Vol. 525 cols. 1478-9 (25 3/1954); Vol. 527, col. 2223 (19/5/1954); col. 2373 (20/5/1954)
- 139 H C. Debates, Vol. 502, col. 221; col. 307 (11/6/1952).
- 140 Christopher Mayhew, Dear Viewer (London: Lincoln Prager, 1953)
- 141 Sunday Dispatch, 7/6/1953, p 1, p 6.
142. Wilson, Pressure Group, p. 157; Briggs, Sound and Vision, p 433.
143. The Council was naturally announced with a letter to The Times on June 4th.
It was signed by Lady Violet Bonham-Carter, Lords Brand, Halifax and Waverly, and the Labour MP and leader of the cinema workers, Tom O'Brien, who at the time was also the Chairman of the TUC.
144. Wilson, Pressure Group, p. 163.
- 145 Mayhew, Dear Viewer. Mayhew referred in particular to the American agency J. Walter Thompson, one of whose Directors, John Rodgers, was a Conservative MP very much involved in the commercial television campaign.
See Wilson, Pressure Group, p. 129; 135-6.
146. House of Lords Debates, Vol. 184, cols 732-3, col. 736 (25/3/1953).
147. Bernard Sendall, Independent Television in Britain, Volume 1, Origin and Foundation, 1946-62 (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 31-35.
- 148 Memorandum by the President of the Board of Trade and Post-Master General, 'Use of Foreign Televis on Plays by Television Stations', 4/1/1954. PRO, CAB129/65, C (54) 2; Memorandum by the President of the Board of Trade, 'Television Film Programmes: Control of Foreign Material', 24/2/1952. PRO, CAB129/66, C (54) 75; Cabinet conclusions, 26/2/1954. PRO, CAB128/27; Sendall, Independent, p 51
149. H C Debates, Vol. 529, col. 336 (22/6 1954)
- 150 House of Lords Debates, Vol. 184, col 540 (25 11 1953).
151. House of Lords Debates, Vol. 184, col 678 (26 11 1953)
- 152 H C Debates, Vol. 502, col. 221 (11 6 1952)
153. H C Debates, Vol. 502, col. 249 (11 6/1952)
- 154 Encounter, Vol. 2, No. 4 (1954), p 59.
- 155 J B. Priestley, 'Our New Society', NS&N, p 63.

156. J.B. Priestley and Jacquetta Hawkes, Journey Down a Rainbow (London Heinemann-Cresset, Readers Union edition 1957), pp. 43-4.
- 157 J B. Priestley, 'Who Is Anti-American?', NS&N, 5/11/1955, pp. 567-8.
158. 'I dislike praising anything American', Priestley acknowledged after finding himself 'reluctantly' praising new American books, 'just as anything American dislikes praising me.' See Reynolds News, 27/10/1957, p. 5.
159. Martin Barker, A Haunt of Fears: The Strange History of the British Horror Comics Campaign (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1992).
160. Dimpleby and Reynolds, An Ocean Apart, p. 273.
161. Geoffrey Pearson, Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears (London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 24. There was also a racial aspect to the Daily Mail's editorial, which wondered whether this music, originating 'in the jungle' was 'the negro's revenge.'
162. 76th Annual Conference of Conservative and Unionist Associations, Llandudno, October 1956, p. 32.
- 163 On the events leading to Suez and the crisis itself. this study has mainly used Keith Kyle Suez (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991); Wm. Roger Louis and Roger Owen (ed.) Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Leon D. Epstein, British Politics in the Suez Crisis (London: Pall Mall, 1964).
164. 73rd Annual Conference of Conservative and Unionist Associations, Margate, October, p. 32.
165. H.C. Debates, Vol. 518, col 243 (21/7 1953); Vol. 520, col. 379; col. 348 (5/11/1953).
- 166 H C. Debates, Vol. 520, cols 403 (5/11/1953).
- 167 H C. Debates, Vol. 520, cols. 423 (5/11 1953).
- 168 The Twentieth Century, February 1954, p. 115.
169. NS&N, 7 8/1954, pp 148-149, 9/7/1955, p. 30.
- 170 LPCR, 1955, p 141 The resolution was moved, almost uncannily, by the newly-elected MP, Koni Zilliacus, who had returned, as if from a time warp, after being expelled in 1949

- 171 A resolution from the floor which called for the resumption of normal trading relations with China - the mover lambasting American the 'hypocrites' who attacked British 'betrayal' while turning a blind eye to American exports to China through South America - was accepted by the Executive, though Sam Watson dismissed the suggestion that the Communist bloc was a serious trading alternative to the American market. See LPCR, 1955, pp. 181-184
172. Tribune, 14/10/1955, p. 10.
173. H.C. Debates, Vol. 550, cols. 399-400 (14/3/1956), The Times, 15/3/1956, p. 4.
174. Barbara Castle, 'America's answer to Arab nationalism - dollar dictatorship', Tribune, 21/9/1956, p. 5; Sydney Silverman, H.C. Debates, Vol. 558, cols. 249-250 (13/9/1956).
- 175 NS&N, 22/9/1956, p. 335.
176. Tribune, 19/10/1956, p. 5. In contrast, Ambassador Aldrich reported that 'there was no anti-Americanism' at the Labour Conference and 'most references to the United States were of friendly nature, particularly US position on Suez.' See Aldrich to Dulles, 8/10/1956. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1955-59, Box 3184, 741 00/10-856.
177. Daily Mail, 28/1/1956, p. 1. The 'anti-American' motion obtained at one time or another 127 different signatures, while a motion by Conservative backbenchers urging the Government to help restore co-operation with the Americans attracted only 26 signatures. See Epstein, British Politics, p. 57.
178. Manchester Guardian, 1/12/1956, p. 1. On the relationship between Lord Hailsham and his mother, from Nashville, Tennessee, see Lord Hailsham, A Sparrow's Flight: The Memoirs of Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone (London Fontana, 1991), pp. 20; 40-41.
179. The most outstanding of these was the maverick Birmingham business-man Stanley Evans, a virulent Labour Right-wing critic of the American threat to the Empire for more than a decade, who resigned his seat in November. See Epstein, British Politics, p. 56; pp. 128-132
- 180 H.C. Debates, Vol. 558, cols. 1541-2, (31/10/1956); col 1701, (1 11 1956), Vol. 561, col 1329, col 1455 (5/12/1956).

181. H.C. Debates, Vol. 562, col. 839 (14/12/1956) Hughes also voiced the concern, usually heard in previous years from the Tory benches, that it was important 'to try to convey information to the American people that the anti-American feeling' of the Tory Party 'is not shared by the people of this country.' See Ibid, col 837.
- 182 Daily Herald, 29/11/1956, p. 4.
183. J P W. Mallalieu, NS&N, 1/12/1956, p. 688.
- 184 Forward, 7/12/1956, p. 4.
- 185 Tribune, 7/12/1956, p. 4.
- 186 Reynolds News, 2/12/1956, p. 6.
- 187 H.C. Debates, Vol. 558, col. 1714 (1/11/1956).
188. H.C. Debates, Vol. 562, col. 1542 (20/12/1956); Vol. 564, cols. 1074-5 (12/2/1957); Vol. 568, col. 59 (1/4/1957). The Motion was withdrawn by Sir Robert Grimston and the other sponsors on the 1st of April, 1957. See The Times, 2/4/1957, p 10.
- 189 Kyle, Suez, p. 546. Epstein, British Politics, pp. 122-128.
190. John Turner, Macmillan (London. Longman, 1994), chapter 6. On Macmillan's view of his mother see Alistair Horne, Harold Macmillan, Volume 1: 1894-1956 (New York: Viking, 1989), p. 11.
191. Aneurin Bevan, 'Dollar Diplomacy?: That's No Answer', Tribune, 4/1/1957, pp. 1-2.

Chapter Seven: “Understanding America”

Politicians, and J B Priestley, could argue endlessly in the early 1950s about who or what was really ‘anti-American’. However, the fact that hostile sentiments towards the United States were abundant in Britain was disputed by nobody. This hostility, especially on the British Left, was viewed with concern by governments on both sides of the Atlantic. It was regarded as a problem for Anglo-American relations, in the same way that American Anglophobia had been for years.

Believing that such sentiments were mainly the outcome of popular ignorance and prejudice, great efforts were made not only to explain American foreign policy, but also to improve the overall image of the United States in Britain. Emphasis was laid on the correction of British misconceptions about American life and culture, created, it was believed, by American films, American servicemen, and the way in which the United States was treated in the British popular press. The American information services in Britain, together with the anti-anti-Americans in Whitehall, the Anglo-American organizations, the BBC, Fleet Street, and the Labour Party, set out to counter the negative images on which ‘anti-Americanism’ seemingly fed. In order to accept the virtues of the Atlantic alliance, the British people were to be taught about the positive qualities of ‘ordinary’ American people.

By considering all the various anti-anti-American efforts to promote educational programmes, hospitality schemes for American ‘GIs’, and favourable commentary about the United States in the British media, this chapter will throw some light on propaganda activities in Britain which have yet to receive academic attention. It

will also attest to the concern about 'anti-Americanism' that preoccupied American and British policy-makers at the time

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British doubts about American leadership and wisdom, heard loudly among wide sections of the British public during the Korean war, reached new peaks in the era of Dulles and McCarthy. The USIS in Britain urged Washington to take Britain off the low priority list 'since the U.K. is the U.S.'s principal ally, and since anti-Americanism and Bevanism are not somnolent forces....'¹ In Washington, where an independent United States Information Agency was set up in 1953 to co-ordinate USIS posts abroad, the low level to which American 'prestige' had sunk in Western Europe as a whole, especially because of McCarthyism, was viewed with alarm by Eisenhower and his new Administration. The wave of hostility which had swept opinion-formers of all political persuasions in France during the Rosenbergs' execution in June 1953 had no parallel in Britain²; and in detailed reports ordered by the National Security Council, Britain was not placed in the 'disturbingly unsatisfactory' league of France, Italy and Denmark. However, Britain did appear in the secondary list of countries in which 'improvement' was 'desirable'.³ In Whitehall, there was full agreement with these findings. For 'the first time in about 90 years,' wrote the Head of the BIS in the United States, Sir Paul Gore-Booth, 'there is serious criticism of America in Britain, and it is largely criticism of the wrong or a semi-fictitious America . . . [I]t is clear the U S

Information Service needs to become more active in Britain, if it is active on the right lines.’⁴

Yet what, indeed, was ‘desirable’, and what were the ‘right lines’? In non-Communist countries, the main activity of the various American information agencies was naturally to counter Soviet propaganda and the Communist ‘Hate America’ campaigns. However, among proud allies such as the British, who often regarded American propaganda as too raucous for Western European ears⁵, the twin objectives of producing ‘a greater awareness in Britain of the Communist danger’ and promoting American goals and aims, often had to be pursued with the discretion of the ‘privately printed booklet’ - Communist Lies About America - that the USIS in London edited and distributed.⁶

‘Open’ American propaganda in Britain, carried out in the press bulletins, library services, films, exhibitions and publications that were offered by three USIS offices in London, Manchester and Edinburgh, focused on more positive goals; these were the obtaining of a ‘widest possible understanding’ of American foreign policy, inspiring ‘confidence’ in American leadership, providing information about ‘America and Americans’ and developing ‘respect’ for American ‘cultural achievements’.⁷ British sensibilities, however, were carefully observed. The tactics and methods employed in implementing the USIS goals took ‘into careful consideration the local psychological factors peculiar to the U K.’; the staff of the USIS had ‘long been schooled to respect these factors, and at all time extreme care is exerted to avoid “talking down” to the British, or appearing to preach or to imply that the U S. is a superior nation.’⁸ The Director of the USIA, Theodore Streibert, explained to British hosts in July 1954 that the United States would ‘go

out of its way to avoid being accused of exporting its way of life'.⁹ That American information activities did not seem to be too domineering or patronizing indeed seemed to be essential. In March 1956 - after the FO and E-SU had implored with him not to neglect USIA activities¹⁰ - Streibert justified new expenditure in Britain by telling a House of Representatives Committee that British Cold War loyalties were surprisingly 'fluctuating'. This was the 'loudest laugh for years', editorialized the Daily Herald: 'Britain will never choose against freedom, even if the Statue of Liberty does.'¹¹

Such sensitivity was the reason why, even in the early 1950s, the most active postwar period of the USIS in Britain, American information officers preferred to work through British 'moulders of public opinion'. They made plans with the FO to change the tendency of the Anglo-American organizations from 'the mildest public activities, of an upper middle class social character', into an 'offensive to deal with anti-American sentiment in Britain.'¹² After much encouragement from the USIS and FO, the E-SU launched in 1953 a Committee for Education in Current Commonwealth-American Affairs with a full-time administrative unit, the bulk of the costs being funded by a private American contribution.¹³ The FO hoped that the Current Affairs Unit would, through its lectures and publications, help to 'combat anti-American prejudices in the United Kingdom at all levels'¹⁴ It was not intended to minimize feeling about 'genuine issues', explained the first director of the unit, General Sir Leslie Hollis, but to supply information and dispel 'misunderstandings' which were apt to arise from British opinion that 'Americans were rough and rude and always chewed gum.'¹⁵ An impressive consultative panel included representatives from a wide range of organizations in industry and the

professions, as well as the main political parties. Through the connections in Labour circles of its first chairman, Francis Williams, the Current Affairs committee was expected 'to go beyond preaching to the converted on Anglo-American relations, and to try to eradicate anti-American prejudices among the trade unions and the "ordinary folk".'¹⁶ Will Lawther and Vic Feather, the assistant General Secretary of the TUC, became closely involved in the committee's efforts to eliminate by 'factual information' the British sources of Anglo-American 'misunderstanding'¹⁷.

The involvement of the USIS with setting up the Current Affairs unit of the E-SU, as it became known, was mainly concerned, of course, with presenting the American point of view relating to the pressing matters of the hour. However, great efforts were also made to improve the image of the American nation and American people in less ephemeral ways. British ignorance and prejudices were to be corrected by long-term educational schemes, such as the Fulbright exchange programme or the funding of books and libraries, which helped to foster 'American Studies', the interrelated study of American history, politics and literature that increased significantly on all levels of British education during the 1950s.¹⁸ This was a positive anti-anti-American outcome of the cultural Cold War, but Britain's growing band of Americanists, as Marcus Cunliffe recalled, still felt uneasy with the fact that their activities 'were seeded with American funds.'¹⁹ It must be stressed again, however, that anti-anti-Americanism did not mean encouraging 'Americanization'. In a discussion on "The Place of American Studies in British Education", held at a conference of education workers at the Cultural Office of the USIS to mark the tenth anniversary of the American Library in London (set-up in

1942), it was pointed out that while 'the formal study of America has increased since before the war', there was 'some resistance in Britain to certain aspects of America, which may not be unnatural or unhealthy.'²⁰

One of the allurements which the Americans proffered to accredited or potential British anti-anti-Americans was an American tour at the State Department's expense. Provided by the Smith-Mundt Informational and Educational Exchange Act of 1948, it gave small travel grants to foreign 'leaders' and other 'moulders of public opinion'. The Americans offered Smith-Mundt grants to politicians and journalists of all shades of political opinion, but they were especially happy to invite those kindly disposed to the Anglo-American alliance in the Labour Party and Trade Unions. Roy Jenkins, who crossed the Atlantic in this way for the first time in 1953, remembered his extensive two-month tour of the United States as 'a brilliant piece of unforced propaganda' by the USIS and 'a major formative influence' on his life.²¹ In 1954, Tony Crosland, after a frustrating time on the Labour backbenches, spent a couple of months in the United States with the help of a Smith-Mundt grant where he was both emotionally happier than for a long time', and intellectually intrigued by the proposition that 'If socialism equalled a 'classless society', then was not America 'more socialist' than Britain?'²² It was this idea that he explored in the Future of Socialism which he began to write soon after

However, it was not always so simple or such a success. A USIS attempt to give Denis Healey a grant in 1951 was thwarted because of his Communist Party past, even though, as a Labour information officer testified, he was one of those 'bona fide ex-Communists' who had established 'unquestionable records of anti-Communist activity in key positions.'²³ Sometimes, a Smith-Mundt grant could

even backfire completely Woodrow Wyatt, who toured the United States in the autumn of 1952, was so offended by the low regard in which Britain was held by the Americans whom he met - even the notorious Colonel McCormick of the Chicago Tribune told him he did not bother attacking Britain any more because she was a spent force - that a tour 'intended by the State Department to make me love America', he later wrote, 'made me resentful and scornful.'²⁴

None the less, American tours were regarded as one of the best ways to improve the image of the American allies. Seeing American life and meeting 'ordinary' Americans was regarded as the best way to correct the sorry misrepresentations created by Hollywood and the popular or left-wing press. Restrictions on the dollar allowance in the early 1950s meant, however, that Atlantic crossings were virtually impossible. So how would the 'average' Briton meet the 'ordinary' American? This problem preoccupied many British anti-anti-American minds too. A detailed survey carried out by the E-SU found that in 1954 official American exchange schemes such as those provided by the Smith-Mundt and Mutual Security Acts helped 24 Britons to cross the Atlantic; but hundreds more had gone to discover America in technical and educational exchange schemes that were sponsored by industrial and professional organizations, or with Government or privately sponsored academic scholarships²⁵ The official interchange of preachers between the American and British Council of Churches was also responsible for sending nine British ministers to the United States in 1955.²⁶ The TUC, which had sent numerous missions in previous years as part of the Anglo-American Council on Productivity, participated now in a new programme started in late 1954 by the Current Affairs unit of the E-SU (with the

help of the American Ford Foundation) for sending young and articulate trade unionists to tour the United States, and report their impressions back at home.²⁷ However, the FO and E-SU always felt that more needed to be done, in particular in the trade unions, to provide travel arrangements for those who could not afford the trip themselves, but were an 'important group in view of the increasing role of American organized labour, and of the anti-American bias in certain sections of the trade union movement in this country.'²⁸

In October 1954 the Sunday Times published an article headlined "Understanding America", in which a retired general who had recently met President Eisenhower, suggested sending annually one thousand Britons to spend at least two months in the United States, a programme, he claimed, which was desired in 'high places in the USA.'²⁹ Considerable discussion was provoked by the article in private and in public, but a meeting of Eisenhower with the E-SU Chairman Lord Baillieu and the British Ambassador Sir Roger Makins made clear that the President had meant what he termed 'opinion-forming people' and not the 'form of mass migration' on the scale contemplated in the article.³⁰ Yet even renewed efforts, which were now made, to increase the exchange arrangements of opinion-formers were frustrated by financial problems. Despite the hard work done by the FO and the E-SU, the State Department wanted to work only within its own existing Smith-Mundt arrangements³¹, the Treasury refused to help with public funds³², and private British foundations turned the scheme down too. Eventually, some consolation was found in funds raised by the E-SU of the United States which enabled two more MPs, and three journalists, to cross the Atlantic every year³³

ii

Another Anglo-American meeting-place on the popular level to which the anti-anti-Americans paid great attention in the early 1950s occurred on British soil. In many parts of the country, the 'average' Briton had a chance to meeting the 'average' American tourist - or the 'ordinary' member of the United States Air Forces (USAF) posted in Britain. The problems left over by the American occupation of Britain in World War Two - the thorny issue of rejected 'war brides'³⁴ or court cases involving damage to British citizens - had not been finally dealt with when the first American strategic bombers were 'invited' to use British bases during the Berlin crisis in July 1948. By June 1949, the USAF numbered 6,000 personnel and in the early 1950s, this figure climbed to around 45,000 stationed in forty-three bases and installations spread across East Anglia, the Home Counties and Lancashire³⁵

Whitehall and the Anglo-American voluntary organizations wished to utilize this renewed large-scale American presence in order to achieve 'understanding' at home and good publicity across the Atlantic. However they found themselves spending much more energy trying to prevent the potential harm to Anglo-American relations caused by the long-term maintenance of a foreign army among a civilian population

The public could be told that the American bombers were necessary to Britain's defence but there was neither the urgency of actual war, nor the daily evidence of sacrifice by the American airmen, which had dampened so much criticism a decade earlier. The only visible 'on duty' American activities were the type of irritants

which easily became a focus for resentment in times of peace, and with the help of the popular press: jet planes flying disturbingly low; U.S. Air Police patrolling the streets or diverting traffic; British civilians being 'held' on the bases by American military personnel during security drills³⁶, or even shot at by a trigger-happy sentry.³⁷ Contacts 'after' hours were even more troublesome. Many of the Americans, posted in Britain for up to three years, had been allowed to bring over their families and this created an urgent housing problem around the American bases.³⁸ And with regards to the younger American airmen, usually on shorter missions, there were those old sources of bitterness, well-known from World War Two: too much pay, too much drink, too much promiscuity.

An idea raised in the FO to restrict somehow their ability to spend in Britain was rejected for fear of antagonizing the American troops; it was, after all, a problem for their commanders to solve and one that was worse in France - always a comforting thought.³⁹ If they had to spend, the Women Voluntary Services (WVS) proposed, trying to be more positive, then let them at least spend not on the willing 'riff-raff', but on well-bred and 'decent' British girls. With the co-operation of the army authorities, only girls recommended by the local WVS committee, or the local parson, were issued with 'guest cards' for dances arranged at American bases.⁴⁰ However, most of these efforts were not encouraged by the Americans themselves. Happy in their almost self-contained bases, they were not interested in fraternizing with the locals except for those commercial and sexual contacts which brought prosperity, and transformed the character, of the neighbouring towns, but often left both sides resentful. The British at American wealth, and the Americans at the general impression some locals created that every

American was fair game for fleecing ⁴¹ It could do little to British pride that the whole situation resembled so much the relationship between the British garrison in the Suez canal and the Egyptian population. 'One almost expects', deplored The Times, 'a cry of "*baksheesh!*" to fall from the lips of some of the taxi-men who lounge about the bases on pay day, at the end of each month.'⁴²

The frequent comparison with the much-talked-about British bases in Egypt⁴³ also indicated that the Cold War presence of American troops, unlike that during World War Two, was loaded with political undertones. This was evident in October 1952, in the debates in the House of Commons over the Visiting Forces Bill, which put into law an agreement, signed a year earlier, to give NATO countries jurisdiction over their own forces, wherever they happened to be stationed. The new Bill, which everyone knew referred mainly to American troops, replaced the temporary Act of 1942 which gave American soldiers in Britain something near to 'extra territorial' rights and was only grudgingly accepted at the time because of the wartime conditions.⁴⁴ Under the Bill of 1952, the legal immunity of all foreign troops was slightly limited, but American servicemen 'on official duty' were still removed from the jurisdiction of British courts⁴⁵, and furthermore, these concessions were now to be put on the statute book: seemingly permanent, therefore, like the American Cold War presence, which had no anticipated D-Day in sight. The Labour Party, making one of its periodic protests at the Tory lack of patriotism, demanded that the arrangements included in the Bill would come into force only when the NATO agreement was ratified in the American Congress and reciprocity was ensured. 'I suppose they are being anti-American again', Churchill muttered, drawing the usual denials from John Strachey

and James Chuter Ede The former Labour Home Secretary told the House that he had many American friends and resented 'very much the idea that if one is pro-British...one is of necessity anti-American.'⁴⁶

Perhaps. But the Labour Party in this case was certainly making use, for partisan reasons, of sentiments of wounded national pride which the popular press exploited so well, by adding the 'arrogance' of American troops with 'too much money to spend, too little work to do, sometimes too little discipline', to their long catalogue of Anglo-American complaints.⁴⁷ In fact, these popular discontents were more of an embarrassment to the Labour Left than anybody else. Doubts about the 'atom bases', or open calls for their removal from British soil, were always accompanied by solemn promises that this had nothing to do with chauvinistic grievances directed at those 'American soldiers who throng some of our streets'.⁴⁸ A 'serious political issue and mere xenophobia have become confused', lamented the NS&N ⁴⁹ 'Why take it out on the American conscripts?', asked Tribune.⁵⁰ Even Socialist Outlook, a small Trotskyist weekly which viewed the bases as part of global American 'war plans', declared that 'anti-Americanism can be reactionary',⁵¹ meaning, of course, the exploitation of popular prejudice by the reactionaries of the Communist Party, whose Daily Worker fed its readers on a daily diet of scare stories based on the friction between American servicemen and British locals 'SACRILEGE NEW U S. CRIME IN BRITAIN ' it headlined across its frontpage on 1 November, 1952, reporting on a drunk American 'GI' who vandalized an old church in Surrey which stood on 'the site where the Saxon Kings of England were crowned '

Such stories and their reverberating echoes in Fleet Street and the Communist press caused considerable worry to the anti-anti-Americans in Whitehall and the voluntary societies. Throughout 1952, in particular, numerous incidents occurred, and the 'GI problem' became widely-debated in the British press.⁵² The attacks on Americans in Manchester by razor-blade gangs were highlighted also in the American press⁵³, raising the usual FO worries about the way Britain was viewed in the United States. Sir Roger Makins, however, believed that 'there are bound to be some unfortunate incidents between foreign forces and the local population'; and at least the worst incident - in which a group of thirty prostitutes violently attacked near Piccadilly Circus the wife of an American GI whom they accused of 'poaching' on their territory as she was strolling with her husband - had eluded the vigilant American press.⁵⁴ But the FO was under strong pressure to do something from the WVS chairman Lady Reading, the veteran World War Two commander of welfare and entertainment schemes for the troops.⁵⁵ Another source of agitation was an 'Anglo-American Dining Group', including Patrick Gordon Walker, which was worried about 'official complacency' and urged the Government to treat the problem on the same administrative scale as during World War Two.⁵⁶

This idea had already been rejected by the FO and the Air Ministry (the department in charge) in the belief that the current GI problem did not warrant such extreme administrative measures.⁵⁷ However, Whitehall did offer help to the voluntary efforts to form local 'hospitality' centres. And the subject of 'USAF welfare' was debated in the Cabinet in late November 1952. In order to solve the problems of accommodation, the Treasury had devised a rent-scheme to provide married quarters for the members of the USAF. The Air Minister, Lord de L'Isle,

emphasized that the creation of American communities with a higher standard of living might breed discontent and he suggested confining these quarters, as much as possible, to the airfields themselves. Continuous efforts to foster good relations between the USAF and their English neighbours were essential, Churchill summed up, and the Air Minister was to report to him on the work being done.⁵⁸ So he did soon after⁵⁹, but in March 1954, Lord de L'Isle wrote to Churchill again, expressing his concern about reports of increasing 'anti-British feeling on U.S.A F bases and of anti-American feeling around them.'⁶⁰ The FO thought these reports were inaccurate but agreed that local hospitality committees on a voluntary basis were not enough; a new plan, originating in the E-SU, was put forward to employ on a full-time basis young British women who would operate Information Centres to be created in the American bases.⁶¹ The Treasury authorized the employment of three information officers for a trial period of six months⁶² and by 1957 fourteen American bases had a Community Relations Officer, as they became known. Many of the tensions and the mutual complaints, however, seemed to remain much the same.⁶³

iii

In operating all of their informational and educational schemes, the anti-anti-Americans in Whitehall and Washington naturally hoped for the fullest co-operation from the BBC and the press. Though never formally an official network, Whitehall mostly enjoyed a pretty cosy relationship with the BBC, certainly compared to that with Fleet Street. The BBC World Service was in practice a

semi-official arm over which, Anthony Eden believed on returning to the Foreign Office in December 1951, the FO exercised 'a certain amount of influence by possessing (though not using) an ultimate power of veto.' Concerning the home services, a generous Eden believed their operators were 'rightly' jealous of their independence (during the Suez crisis five years later he seemed to have changed his mind on that) and, in any case, the FO 'very rarely' had complaints about the presentation of foreign policy issues.⁶⁴ Respectful of BBC sensitivities, the FO handled its operators with special care, but still expected them to give due publicity to the importance of NATO⁶⁵, or the exchange schemes with the United States.⁶⁶

The 'close and constant' contact between the FO and the BBC did not mean, of course, that the United States was never to be criticized on the air. As long as important segments of political opinion had serious doubts about American foreign policy, these would be heard. That BBC coverage of current affairs should reflect all 'British views' which had 'serious backing' in the country was clearly stated by Sir Ian Jacob, the Director-General, in order to demonstrate 'the tolerance which is a cardinal feature of British democracy.'⁶⁷ True, after the outbreak of the Korean War the Communist Party - though this was never officially declared - could only dream of broadcasting its opinion of the United States, or anything else.⁶⁸ And Kingsley Martin complained bitterly too of losing an income of up to £1000 per annum, because what he himself termed as his 'reasonable, Leftish, but non-party' broadcasting services were suddenly, and mysteriously, no longer required. Martin thought that perhaps the pernicious hand of the FO, or the American Embassy, was at work behind the scenes.⁶⁹

Yet even if this was the case, anti-anti-Americanism on the air was not about the political screening of every utterance on American foreign policy. More important was the BBC's dissemination of knowledge about American life for schools and to the general audience.⁷⁰ In late 1952, a series of six programmes for the Home Service - "Talking of America" - was planned by the Talks Department to 'examine some of the fundamental prejudices and misconceptions about America which are current in this country.'⁷¹ Various British 'criticisms and prejudices' concerning American materialism, crime, education and democracy were analysed by American experts and British transatlantic travellers: the distinguished American anthropologist Margaret Mead, for example, presided over a programme discussing British doubts about the habitual American tendency to 'spoil their children, glamorise their women, and conform to social patterns that create artificial human relations'.⁷² The aim of the series, to promote 'understanding', did not, of course, mean agreeing on all things with the American State Department or Congress. The final programme, on American foreign policy, tellingly titled 'The Innocent Abroad', was purposely to include Helen Liddell, a Chatham House information officer known to have 'considerable doubts and dislikes about American foreign policy.'⁷³

Programmes to educate the British public about the outside world were not confined to expositions of American life and people, France was another BBC favourite⁷⁴, and there was also a monthly survey of Soviet political and cultural affairs.⁷⁵ Yet even though these were not given anything like the same amount of space allotted to reports from the American scene, the anti-anti-Americans still pressed continuously for more. Lady Margaret D'Arcy, back in 1954 from a

lecture tour across the Atlantic and ready to continue the same good work at home, told an FO information officer that she felt the BBC concentrated too much on talks on the United States by 'well-known names on a high intellectual plane in the evening services' and that 'British understanding of America' could be improved by talks 'at a lower level in the morning programmes; i.e. directed at a women's audience on an ordinary intellect level.'⁷⁶ The BBC replied that enough was being done in programmes such as 'Woman's Hour'⁷⁷ and that there was a 'constant supply of talks about America by Americans and by English people who have lived there...mostly by "ordinary" people who talk about "ordinary" matters with warmth and informality.'⁷⁸ The BBC had to deal in this way with many such suggestions.⁷⁹ Kenneth Lindsay, a former Independent MP and PPS at the Ministry of Education, nagged the BBC persistently for two years to let him broadcast a programme on 'the other America'. In November 1955, a slot was found for him for a talk on the Home Service titled 'Understanding America'.⁸⁰ But further suggestions from Lindsay were not accepted because, as the Controllers claimed, there was 'always a far larger supply than need of people broadcasting about America.'⁸¹ The FO, on the other hand, believed that the BBC could do much more. Alistair Cooke's "Letter from America" was as usual noted for particular praise, but apart from that - "American Commentary" ended in May 1953 - the BBC had 'few programmes directly applied to the United States on radio.'⁸²

Radio, however, was by now no longer the only broadcasting concern of the anti-anti-Americans television was fast becoming the centre of the mass media with a great potential to do good - and bad. Combining the intensity of the press and the impact of the screen, it could transmit like never before the less savoury

aspects of American life, such as McCarthyism, for example. In late March 1953, an audience of five million saw a (twice-repeated) BBC dramatization of “The Troubled Air”, a novel by Irwin Shaw about anti-Communist hysteria in an American radio station.⁸³ Towards the end, an American radio announcer was heard saying that under the McCarran Act, even Winston Churchill would be screened on arrival at the United States; and the last scene had that pure irony which even G.B. Shaw could not better - the Statue of Liberty. A year later, in February 1954, McCarthy himself made his first appearance on BBC television, seen grilling a Government employee during a session of the Senate sub-Committee for Investigations which McCarthy chaired. It gave ‘millions of viewers’, said the Daily Herald, the opportunity to see ‘what a McCarthy witch-hunt really means.’⁸⁴

If television could transmit such negative images, surely it could also be used to carry positive images encouraging knowledge and understanding. Since the late 1940s, the BBC and French television had begun to explore the technical framework that would enable a vast exchange of programmes to take place. One of the early results, a whole Anglo-French Television week in July 1952, led Sir William Haley to envisage a mutual exchange of features ultimately with ‘all the countries of the Atlantic Community, not excluding America’⁸⁵ Only a decade after the first broadcast of the BBC from Calais in 1950 would a ‘live’ transmission be possible across the Atlantic; but in the intervening years there was no lack of American programmes on the BBC and then on ITV. By 1950, the USIS was already using the BBC to reach ‘many thousands’ of the television-owning elite, ‘to present the best U S I S films to vast audiences of high informational priority.’⁸⁶

Yet as more and more sets became available, television in Britain soon became, as in the United States, the main medium of mass entertainment. The BBC had had connections with American networks such as the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) since before World War Two, but the kind of programmes they dispatched were sanctioned by market forces rather than by the USIS. The main anti-anti-American concern was that these products of American commercial television simply transferred onto the small screen the same misrepresentations of American life made by Hollywood. Furthermore, the BBC did not want to encourage further the erosion of the national identity as a result of the new influx of American cultural products. Sir Ian Jacob was considering a broad campaign for 'the Anglicisation of popular music' in 1955 by trying to eliminate the influence on British composers of the 'American idiom' and 'pseudo-American accent'⁸⁷; and Sir George Barnes, the Director of Television Broadcasting, believed that with three American film series currently running, and another NBC series of comedy shows being negotiated, the BBC was already showing enough of what American commercial TV had to offer.⁸⁸

Carefully planned anti-anti-Americanism, on the other hand, was a completely different matter. Barnes reached an agreement in 1955 with the American Embassy to produce a documentary series on the 'American way of life.'⁸⁹ The original idea belonged to Leonard Miall, the head of the Television Talks Department, who for the previous eight years had been the BBC's Washington correspondent. Miall had devised the series as a televised equivalent of Alistair Cooke's "Letters" presenting a non-Hollywood picture of the American scene in half-hour programmes. The intention at first was to use newsreels and other library material

but an offer of a film unit from the USIA was accepted by the BBC, which paid part of the costs. The narrator of “Report from America” which was advertised in the Radio Times with the open admission that it was produced with the help of the USIA - on subjects such as the American press, education, and traffic control - was Joseph Harsch, a veteran journalist and radio broadcaster of the BBC radio’s ‘American Commentary’. First broadcast in February 1956 and reported to be popular with viewers, the series ran on a monthly basis until July 1957, twenty programmes in all.⁹⁰

iv

‘It seems to me to be very odd that our broadcasts from here should be at the disposal of the Americans for propaganda purposes’, complained Lord Beaverbrook to one of his editors about “Report from America”.⁹¹ As this touchy remark indicates, the anti-anti-Americans in Whitehall and Washington found it much harder to deal with Fleet Street, though it was Fleet Street that was regarded as one of the two main sources, with Hollywood films, of British misconceptions about American life. At a discussion held in the FO in June 1955 on ‘the projection of United States information in the United Kingdom’, the view was that ‘on an average reporting in the American newspapers of British affairs was very much sounder than the reporting of American affairs in the United Kingdom. With the exception of the more serious newspapers, press reports on America were confined to short excerpts concerning crime, sex, and general gossip in second-rate reports from columnists’ What was needed was ‘a series of fair and objective articles on

ordinary American life' but the only way these could be 'stimulated' would be through 'personal interest of the newspaper proprietors' and 'there was a tendency amongst these to be jealous and suspicious of Foreign Office intervention in their affairs.'⁹²

Back in November 1950, after years of complaints from the State Department about the way that Reuters portrayed American events, the FO approached the news-agency's General Manager, Christopher Chancellor, over a news item describing American military manoeuvres in Germany. The FO viewed this article as potentially 'anti-American'.⁹³ Chancellor, however, claimed the story was factual and was published in the American press. 'We cannot impose a censorship upon ourselves because of American susceptibilities any more than one would dream of suggesting that similar action be taken on the American side', he maintained, for 'we should soon find ourselves in the dangerous position of suppressing news.'⁹⁴ This never-ending argument over the quality of news and the objectivity of facts shows how hard it was to determine exactly when and where reporting ended and prejudice began. But if this was the measure of anti-anti-American co-operation that the FO could expect from a news-agency handsomely 'subscribed' to by the British Government⁹⁵, or from someone who was soon to become the Chairman of the Pilgrims, then what could be expected of the wilder off-shoots of Fleet Street?

American information officers in particular learned the hard way to be extremely watchful of 'the hyper-sensitivity of British editors to foreign "influence".'⁹⁶ Blunt attempts to influence writers or editors, especially of the Left, could be simply self-defeating. An attempt by one Embassy official in May 1951 to

persuade the editor of Picture Post, Ted Castle, not publish a story on the Chinese army by the American dissident journalist Andrew Roth, was noted by Kingsley Martin in the NS&N as a 'profoundly disturbing' attempt to pressurize a 'British editor' ⁹⁷ It was much more useful to concentrate on supplying information to the helpful anti-anti-American editors and journalists that could be found in abundance in the staunchly Atlanticist 'quality' press. The USIS could thus report to Washington in dramatic fashion how with the help of the Manchester Guardian's foreign editor, Alistair Heatherington, who had helped with cross-checking, it had saved the free world in August 1951 from another inaccurate Reuters report that would have been useful for 'anti-American elements who contend U.S. is trying to start a war'.⁹⁸ In 1953, responding to the 'numerous' press articles 'critical of things and policies American', the USIS took credit for supplying information to 'writers of counter-anti-American pieces' such as the News Chronicle columnist A J. Cummings, who wrote again (like in December 1950), that it was 'time we stopped sniping at the Americans.'⁹⁹

That this 'sniping' at the allies on anything concerning American foreign policy, American 'GIs', or American domestic life and culture was carried out daily by 'a sensationalist press to which everything anti-American is news' continued to be in the early 1950s a constantly-heard complaint, in particular in the American press.¹⁰⁰ 'What picture of the U S. do Britons get from the British press?', asked Time in February 1953 It found few faults with 'quality' newspapers such as The Times, the Manchester Guardian, and especially the Observer, which tried to give a 'more rounded' picture of American life and correct the damage done by others. But Time highlighted, among other examples of 'wild reporting', the coverage of the

United States by the Mirror group's Ralph Champion, who had told his millions of readers in January 1953, after arriving only five days earlier, that 'everyone' in New York was 'suffering from war and atom phobia in their most advanced forms', and that he had found 'deep atom-proof shelters' that were 'strictly for dollars, deeds and share certificates No humans need apply.'¹⁰¹

Fleet Street objected to these charges as was always the case. "ARE WE REALLY ANTI-AMERICAN?" asked in July 1953 the popular columnist Cassandra in the Daily Mirror, and after rehearsing, and refuting, accusations made in the American press, his obvious answer was no.¹⁰² The editor of the Daily Express, Arthur Christiansen, responded a year later to American charges, always directed at his newspaper, with the calming assurance that there was 'no danger whatever of our readers thinking that Americans are anything but the serious-minded, peace-loving people that I know them to be.' More than that, the Daily Express, he proudly announced, had recently 'inaugurated Anglo-American Study Groups throughout the land.... Half a dozen meetings have already been held and many more are planned.'¹⁰³ And indeed, the Daily Express, disturbed by the fact that there had 'grown up among foolish people in Britain a disposition to believe ill of the Americans', had decided to counter the 'anti-U.S. propaganda' by promoting 'a better understanding between the British and American people '¹⁰⁴ In one of these study groups, it reported, 2000 people heard Lord Hailsham and other Anglo-American experts patiently explain American policies and defend the American 'GIs' from the charge that their arrogance abroad resulted from the sense of freedom they enjoyed from the domineering American women at home.¹⁰⁵ Thus, even the Daily Express, which in the very same month in a State Department

memorandum was said to contain articles and editorials which 'frequently reflect a strong anti-American bias', was claiming itself to be doing anti-anti-American work.¹⁰⁶

It was all Fleet Street being sanctimonious at its worst, of course, but such attitudes could sometimes be useful to the anti-anti-Americans in Whitehall. Dealing with a cause for Anglo-American friction such as the presence of the American bases on British soil, the Daily Express was regarded by the Head of the FO Press Department as 'incurable and there is little that can be done about them.'¹⁰⁷ However, the popular press as a whole was, in fact, viewed as the best medium for the FO to reach beyond the 'sophisticated section of public opinion' to the 'man in the pub and the farmer.'¹⁰⁸ To this audience, a Daily Graphic article on the relations between the British civilians and American servicemen - "Allies Must Be Friends As Well" - could be praised as 'helpful' even if not 'abnormally intelligent.'¹⁰⁹

In this respect, even the notorious Daily Mirror could be of help. The Daily Mirror's editor Silvester Bolam told the FO in 1952 that he 'considered one of the principal duties of a popular newspaper...to do everything possible to encourage friendship and understanding between the British and the American peoples.' He promised to 'take every opportunity to emphasise any good aspects of Anglo-American relations - particularly in connection with the U.S. Forces in Britain.'¹¹⁰ In October 1952, the Daily Mirror duly highlighted more than any other newspaper the rescue work of American medical units at the scene of a devastating train crash at Harrow. The picture of an American nurse administering plasma to a British soldier almost covered the front page. An accompanying story with the headline,

“THE ALLIES”, opened with the words, ‘allies in war, allies in peace’. The Daily Mirror, full of praise for American rescue teams, ended also with a tribute from an American airman to Britain herself as a sturdy and worthy ally: ‘The British’, he said, ‘don’t cry.’¹¹¹ No wonder that a grateful FO official in the information department thought the Daily Mirror’s front page was ‘worth several thousands of dollars spent on the conventional methods of B I.S. and the U.S I.S.’¹¹², and the editor Bolam came to be regarded in the FO, together with E-SU activist and editor of the News Chronicle, Robert Cruickshank, as being ‘on the side of the Angels.’¹¹³

In following years, now edited by Hugh Cudlipp, the Daily Mirror won further praise from the FO for its articles on transatlantic differences and a special pamphlet that it published on Anglo-American relations in May 1954 at a time when the Daily Mirror found that ‘in Britain, and particularly in the Labour movement, anti-American feeling is growing.’¹¹⁴ But when it came to reporting American affairs, as opposed to frankly presenting the manifold reasons why the British and American people were ‘touchy’ about each other¹¹⁵, the FO was too apprehensive to ask Hugh Cudlipp a year later to carry out in his tabloid the specially-planned series ‘of fair and objective articles on ordinary American life.’ The ‘element of risk’ involved seemed to be too great, in that the Daily Mirror might have chosen for the job their resident correspondent in the United States Ralph Champion, ‘a sensational journalist who was out for little more than to create sensations.’¹¹⁶

v

The anti-anti-Americans in the FO were soon to deal during Suez with much more dramatic events and sensations. In his valedictory despatch as British Ambassador in Washington, received at the height of the crisis, Sir Roger Makins wrote that the old American 'sense of inferiority' towards Britain

has been transferred across the Atlantic and has acquired an additional feeling of resentment among many British people that the United States has succeeded to the role of world leadership which they so long enjoyed. ...

To this state of affairs the inability of the ordinary Englishman and woman to travel to visit the United States must progressively contribute. The popular idea of American life is often so wide of the mark that only personal experience can correct it.¹¹⁷

Worried FO officials held in November 1956 urgent meetings with the head of the USIS in Britain, Bradley Connors, who was himself, as could be expected, 'only too well aware of the anti-American feeling in this country'.¹¹⁸ But as stories of unprecedented popular hostility filled the newspapers - of American tenants being evicted from their houses by angry landlords, or refused service at petrol stations¹¹⁹ - it was clear that all the energy spent in previous years on the improvement of public attitudes and cultural images did not count for much when the painful process of Britain's domination and displacement by the United States was so brutally exposed by a political event such as the Suez crisis. Moreover, many anti-anti-American efforts had previously been directed towards supporters of the British Left, to the members of the trade unions and to potential Labour voters.

Yet as Harold Macmillan told Eisenhower at Bermuda in March 1957, it was 'the most patriotic and traditionalist elements in my country which were the most disturbed.'¹²⁰ And by that Macmillan meant, of course, Tories who had previously been regarded as the least 'anti-American' element in British politics because of their loyal support of the Atlantic alliance and more favourable acceptance of American 'capitalism' and Cold War policies¹²¹

In the next few years, the subject of 'anti-American feeling' in Britain remained high on the Anglo-American agenda. American press correspondents such as Drew Middleton of the New York Times frequently reported the extent of popular hostility towards 'United States policy, if not Americans'; and American visitors such as the one-time Presidential hopeful, Adlai Stevenson, urged the British Government in May 1957 to make 'more frequent approving sounds' about the Anglo-American alliance in order to keep down the corresponding isolationist pressures in the United States.¹²² In the FO, everybody agreed with Stevenson that the problem of 'anti-American sentiment' in Britain was greater than the popular 'anti-British sentiment' in the United States. But 'the wide-spread feeling... amongst people of all parties that we were let down by the Americans at the time of Suez', it was noted, was the very reason why it was not yet 'politically feasible' for Ministers to take every opportunity to 'say approving things' about the United States.¹²³

Although 'feeling against the Americans has died down since Suez', Sir Paul Gore-Booth, at the time the senior FO official superintending American affairs, commented in February 1958, 'there is a tiresome anti-American habit of emotion in this country at the moment, superficial if you like, but containing too much

complacency and jealousy à la fois to be very comfortable '¹²⁴ What seemed to him to be public 'complacency' about 'the greatest danger we have ever faced',¹²⁵, meaning the Soviet Union, was always the main reason for British anti-anti-Americanism. And the particular worry of the anti-anti-Americans in the winter of 1957-58 was the outcry in Left-wing circles, as well as in the Tory popular press, about news that American bombers were carrying hydrogen bombs in flights over Britain.¹²⁶ However, there was not in the FO the same concern about the effects of Communist propaganda as there had been earlier in the decade. The Khrushchev 'revelations' about Stalinism in February 1956, and the Russian invasion of Hungary later that year, nearly finished all that was left of the CPGB as a political force on the British Left; and, probably in the wake of the Suez crisis, the subject of 'anti-American sentiment' was in any case treated in FO memoranda in the late 1950s as a national rather than an ideological problem.

The question was, however, what the anti-anti-Americans in Whitehall could expect to do to counter this 'tiresome anti-American habit of emotion'. In January 1959 J.C. Macleod, a BIS official in California, was surprised by the amount of 'anti-American sentiment...expressed on all sides' that he had encountered during a visit in Britain. 'On principle' he had 'no objection at all to people being anti-American if they want to be', but he found it 'very trying to listen to anti-American sentiments' based on ignorance or on reading the Daily Express

I found too many people in Britain who clearly know nothing about the social, economic and political structure of this country, in particular as it affects the great majority of Americans who are neither millionaires nor

influential, but apparently this does not prevent our people from speaking in terms of scorn about what they imagine the Americans to be.

As the Americans themselves did not seem 'to have mastered the art of projecting themselves abroad in a favourable light', Macleod suggested that 'the more articulate Foreign Service officers who have spent some years in America and are without undue prejudice, could well be used during periods on home leave to address groups, radio and television throughout Britain.'¹²⁷

An interesting discussion followed on the desirability of the FO undertaking directly the work of anti-anti-Americanism. While there was general agreement that 'anti-American feeling' should be dealt with, the anti-anti-American remedy suggested by Macleod cut across FO regulations on public speeches, and reservations were made about the question of expenditure.¹²⁸ 'I do not think it is the job of the British tax payer to foot the bill (subsistence, travelling expenses etc.) for Foreign Service officers to popularise the USA', was a comment that was repeated by others.¹²⁹ 'I am not sure that the disparity between the state of official Anglo-American relations and that of Anglo-American public relations could be equalised by members of the F[oreign S[ervice] conducting campaigns', minuted another. 'The result might well be no change except in the public attitude to the F O. which might become worse!'¹³⁰ The prevailing view was that 'it is surely the job of the Americans to project themselves in this country - except insofar as well-meaning F.S O.'s who have been to (and liked) the U.S.A are prepared to foster the cause as individuals '¹³¹ 'Something perhaps might be done with American money and British speakers, not necessarily from the Foreign Service', was the vague conclusion.¹³²

Five months later, a trip by Macmillan to Russia, followed by stalled British attempts to convene a summit over Berlin, opened a flood of comment in the British press about the weakness and indecisiveness of the Administration of the 'old' and 'sick' President Eisenhower.¹³³ And in the FO, Gore-Booth was again worried 'about the recrudescence of anti-American nonsense in this country and in particular about the appalling misconception of U.S. motivation and conduct.' He therefore asked the American department to prepare a study of 'this malady and the effectiveness or otherwise of American and other attempts to combat it.'¹³⁴ Summing up national resentments which have been at work in Britain for nearly two decades, the memorandum which the American department began to prepare stipulated 'a number of reasons, some strictly avoidable, others almost inevitable' for 'anti-American feeling':

(a) envy at American power and prosperity and belief that this has been built up at our expense; (b) fear that American rashness will land us in a nuclear war, (c) belief that American trade policies are unduly selfish; (d) apprehension that the Americans are deliberately seeking to take over our spheres of influence in e g the Middle East and Africa, (e) an inchoate dislike of American social and cultural influence e g. in "Look Back in Anger" the hero says "It's no fun living in the American age - unless you happen to be an American.", (f) ignorance, due to (1) financial difficulties preventing Britons from visiting the USA, (2) the grotesque picture of the USA often depicted in the movies; (3) the behaviour of some American tourists, who are enabled by the exchange rate to live here in a style to which they are unaccustomed¹³⁵

In the final draft of the memorandum - "Anti-American Feeling in the U K." - it was agreed 'that there is a deep-rooted sense of uncertainty and distaste here for what is popularly thought to be the American way of life, as expressed in American foreign policy and in what is seen here of American behaviour.' On the other hand, it was also recognized that there was 'a great fund of goodwill towards the Americans based on all the well-known historical and emotional associations' and therefore 'the problem is a complex one, in dealing with which it is necessary to be wary of over-simplification.' As experience had shown, despite a 'relatively small number' of incidents, regular contact with tourists and especially the American Air Force personnel were 'the best single healthy way of improving feelings.

The fund of personal knowledge of Americans, which has been growing up through contacts of this kind since 1941, must to some extent counteract the basic misunderstandings and uncertainties. It demonstrates clearly that in Anglo-American relations par excellence, to know is to understand and to understand is to pardon. Unfortunately, even these closer contacts cannot be relied upon to dispel all aspects of anti-American feeling

Not much could be done, the memorandum stated, about the 'deep-seated' envy and resentment of American power and culture, which resembled the antagonism towards Britain in the nineteenth century. The memorandum expressed 'hope that as time passes we shall reconcile ourselves more easily to historical changes which we are powerless to prevent' Nevertheless it was 'clearly desirable', to do something about the 'anti-American prejudice ..constantly encountered in conversations with people in all classes of society.' As the cost of travel to the

United States made it impossible for most Britons to see the true virtues of American life, what seemed to be required was

an increased effort in the field of press, radio and television in the U.K. to say the right kind of things about the Americans, to present them in a reasonably favourable light and as far as possible soothe wounded susceptibilities. It will particularly help if the vast but comparatively unpublicized side of sensible, well-conducted family life in the U.S. could be made known in the U.K. through the cinema, television, films, short stories in the magazines etc.^{'136}

As always, however, the job of presenting a better image of American life in Britain was seen as belonging essentially to the American information services, who seemed to have at present a more limited interest in the problem. For example, 'it was a pity', an official in the American department lamented, that the USIS 'do not seem to produce for BBC television some good factual programmes about ordinary American life.'¹³⁷

More experienced propagandists at the FO were sceptical, however, even about the ability of the Americans themselves to tackle British 'anti-American sentiment'. Paul Wright, Head of the FO information department, expressed doubts about curing a 'malaise' which affected the Americans not only in Britain 'but throughout the Free World'. He too believed that only the Americans themselves could do something about it, but he stressed that a way should be found for 'putting over the problem without asking the Americans to be "less American" - for that, I fear, is often what it really boils down to.'¹³⁸ An even more realistic assessment of a decade of British anti-anti-Americanism was produced by Ralph Murray, an old

hand at FO overt and covert propaganda activities. 'What we are up against', he minuted, 'was basically an inferiority complex in this country as a fading power...against a brash and successful America' Murray did not think that much could be done in the 'official field' by the British Government. 'Of course there will always be frictions, resentments and suspicions' needing attention, he wrote, but the 'whole complex' of unofficial contact in the commercial world and mass media was one that the Government could not really expect to control. Thus no major initiative in the field of Anglo-American relations was useful beyond encouraging the existing schemes for educational exchanges, or cultivating 'sound' political commentary in the press on both sides of the Atlantic. As for urging the USIS to do more, another favourite pastime of the anti-anti-Americans, Murray told Paul Gore-Booth that the American Government had previously received advice from a self-appointed public relations consultant about how to put themselves over in Britain and 'the recommendations really boiled down to the Americans behaving as creatures quite different from what they were' Murray in any case did not believe that the Americans needed any British lessons in carrying out surveys about attitudes towards the United States and 'probably know more about this problem than we do.'¹³⁹

The USIS in Britain indeed carried out in late 1959 a detailed and comprehensive study of the American image in Britain, whose conclusions tended to confirm the opinion that the postwar anti-anti-American efforts had had little

effect on a public which derived its impressions of American life from the mass media and Hollywood. 43 per cent of the 1000 sample cited national (mainly popular) morning newspapers as their chief sources of information about United States; next were American television programmes, British television programmes, British weeklies and Sunday papers, films, friends, radio, books and American magazines; only 1 per cent cited the USIS (though the survey proudly stated that the 9 per cent of the sample who had remembered seeing USIS material gained very positive impressions).¹⁴⁰ As the USIS survey revealed, British images of American life were not substantially different from those recorded in the extensive MOI surveys during World War Two. The British still primarily admired the United States for its material prowess and high standard of living, while the same sizeable minority found nothing to admire in American art and culture.¹⁴¹ Negative images of American life - fast living, high pressure, aggressiveness, noise, hysteria, confusion and immaturity - were still more widespread in Britain than positive ones, and the most unfavourable stereotype of 'the American' was by far that of a boaster always 'praising America' and 'talking too much'.¹⁴² However, the more optimistic evaluations made at the FO about the basic soundness of Anglo-American relations at the level of popular opinion were also confirmed. At least half of those asked in the survey had contact with Americans; despite all the petty criticisms the level of esteem for American servicemen, civilians and tourists was reported to be 'quite high'; the impressions gained of American life (even from American films) were on the whole 'favorable', the British still wanted to hear more about 'ordinary' American life¹⁴³; and rather ironically, when one thinks of all the anti-anti-American efforts since 1941 to counter the British ignorance of the

United States, the survey found that 'the greatest single asset of the U S. in Britain' was 'the feeling among a plurality of the sample that Americans are really basically British.'¹⁴⁴

Notes and References

1. This was not to plead for more funds, the USIS noted, but for 'the necessary films, books and special services....' American Embassy to State Department, 'IIA. Semi-annual Evaluation Report - June 1 to November 30, 1952', 18/2/1953. NA, RG 59, Decimal Files 1950-1954, Box 2354, 511.41/2-1853.
2. The British Ambassador in France, Oliver Stanley, wrote to Churchill: 'I am informed by those recently in England that they were surprised by the extent of the passionate interest shown here...after the comparatively minor reaction at home where it was largely confined to left-wing quarters. There is no doubt that endemic anti-Americanism as much as Communism is at the root of most of the manifestations in favour of the Rosenbergs. One hears of our own treatment of Nunn May and of Fuchs frequently contrasted with the United States treatment of the Rosenbergs whose execution is ascribed to the wave of anti-Communism prevalent in the United States....' See O. Stanley to Churchill, 26/6/1953. PRO, FO371/103563, AU1651 9. Even the non-Communist Left in Britain was, in fact, equally critical of the Communists who used the affair to cover the outburst of anti-Semitism in the Communist world in Stalin's dying days See Tribune, 26 6 1953, p. 2.
3. Study Prepared by the Operations Co-ordinating Board, 23/9/1953. FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol 1, p. 1529.
4. Memorandum prepared by P. Gore-Booth, 22 5/1953. PRO, FO371/103518, AU1052 19.
5. Senior FO officials were always worried that American propagandists intended to dominate NATO publicity machinery, without sensitivity to the pride of

- European allies or in a way that was too blatantly anti-Communist. See F. Hoyer-Millar to C. Warner, 2/4/1951, PRO, FO953/1178 P10331/54; C Warner to A Moorehead, 13/7/1951. PRO, FO953/1179, P10331/80.
- 6 American Embassy to State Department, 'IIA' Semi-Annual Evaluation Report - 1/6/1952-30/11/1952', 18/2/1953 NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-1954, Box 2354, 511 41/2-1853.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. E-SU Memorandum, 17/7/1954. William Clark Papers, Box 108, fols 137-138
10. In 1955, the FO was planning to speak to Streibert about the low standards of the USIA in Britain even though it was known that Streibert himself 'appears to be very satisfied with it.' Minute by P.F Grey, 20/7/1955. PRO, FO953/1601, PG1458/24.
11. Daily Herald, 28/3/1955, p 4; p 2. The Times, 28/3/1955, p. 8.
12. Patrick O'Sheel to State Department, 'Report on Labor Information Activities, Britain', 25/7/1951. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-1954, Box 2353, 511.41/7-2651.
13. Most of the costs of the new unit were to be paid by the E-SU with the help of proceeds recently received from the legacy of C.K Crane of Pasadena, California, an American friend of the E-SU. See The English-Speaking World, Vol. 35, No. 2 (March 1953), pp. 13-14.
14. J.G. Boyd to P H Gore-Booth, 22/1/1953. PRO, FO371/103520, AU1054/1
15. The Times, 12/1/1953, p 3. General Sir Leslie Hollis, a former Deputy Secretary (military) to the Cabinet, was later replaced by his assistant Peter Storrs. Molly Hamilton, formerly of the Information Department of the FO, helped on a part-time basis
16. Minute by J G Boyd, 23/1/1953. PRO, FO371/103520, AU1054 1. How much the anti-anti-Americans too could express resentment at the extent of American power and influence in Britain can be attested in Francis Williams's protests a decade later, in The American Invasion (London: Anthony Blond, 1962).

17. TUC Archives, Mss 292, 973/41-43. In 1956, the TUC decided to give the Committee £100 annually for five years for the sake of bringing American trade unionists to Britain.
18. Sigmund Skard, American Studies in Europe, Their History and Present Organization, Vols. 1-2 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), pp. 71-127. In its first year, 1949, the Fulbright programme already enabled 257 American professors, teachers and students to come to Britain while 237 Britons went to the United States. See 'Country Paper - Britain', 8/2/1950. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-1954, Box 2353, 511.41/2-850 The Communists certainly viewed the Fulbright programme as nothing but American propaganda. See Philip Bolsover, America Over Britain (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1953), p. 99.
19. Marcus Cunliffe, 'Backward Glances', Journal of American Studies, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1980), p. 95.
20. The conference in December 1952 included around 80 participants from the Embassy, the Ministry of Education, and BBC, as well as teachers, text-book writers and publishers. See Embassy to State Department, 23/1/1953. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-4, Box 2354, 511 41/1-2353.
21. Jenkins, A Life, pp. 100-102. Douglas Jay, who went on a Smith-Mundt tour in the Autumn of 1955, recalled that his first casual impressions of the United States were 'mixed'. He had the 'bad luck' of being beaten on the head and mugged on his first night in Washington, but was later resoundingly struck by the deep attachment to democracy, and to British values and traditions, that he found everywhere. See Douglas Jay, Change and Fortune: A Political Record (London: Hutchinson, 1980), pp. 243-245.
22. Dalton Diary, 8 1/1955. Dalton papers, Part I, 47, folio 3.
23. Patrick O'Sheel to State Department, 'Report on Labor Information Activities, Britain', 25 7/1951 NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511 41 7-2651
24. Woodrow Wyatt, Confessions of an Optimist (Collins London, 1985), pp 187-195. For his angry comments on the United States on his return, see the Manchester Guardian, 24 11/1952, p. 2.

- 25 See survey in PRO, FO371/114367, AU1051/26.
- 26 Manchester Guardian, 25/3/1955. To the programme, which also brought 11 American Ministers to Britain, were added of course the private Atlantic sojourns of, for example, Billy Graham.
- 27 Press release of the E-SU, 15/11/1954. TUC files, Mss 292, 973/43. After the success of the visit of the first two trade unionists in 1954, the programme was expanded and four were sent in 1955. See the Manchester Guardian, 23/2/1955; 2/5/1955
- 28 Memorandum by R.P. Pinsent, 24/3/1955. PRO, FO371/114368, AU1051/43.
29. General Sir Francis de Guingand The Sunday Times, 3/10/1954, p. 6.
30. Lord Baillieu to General de Guingand, 29/11/1954. PRO, FO371/114366, AU1051/2; R Makins to R. Speaight, 3/12/1954. PRO, FO371/109116, AU1054/30.
31. Minute by M.C.G Man, 21/1/1955. PRO, FO371/114366, AU1051/4.
32. Brooke to Lord John Hope, 19/9/1955. PRO, FO371/114370, AU1031/65.
33. Darvall to Beillieu, 19/11/1955. PRO, FO371/114370, AU1051/72. The first two MPs to go, Bernard Braine (Conservative) and Desmond Donnelly (Labour), were to spend around seven weeks in the United States in early 1956. See The Times, 4/1/1956, p. 5.
34. The FO operated until the early 1950s a scheme of Legal Aid for GI Brides who had been deserted in the United States.
35. Duke, US Defence Bases, pp 198-199. See also figures for 1954-58 in a minute by E G Andrews, 25/3/1958. PRO, FO371/132348, AU1196/18.
- 36 Daily Herald, 29/10 1952, p. 3.
- 37 The Under Secretary of State at the Air Ministry, George Ward, wrote to Major-General Roscoe C. Wilson of the USAF on the June 11th, 1954, imploring him to make sure that two 'embarrassing' shooting incidents were not repeated. See PRO, FO371/ 109142, AU11919/5
- 38 Questions were asked in Parliament about these housing problems as early as 1949 See H C Debates Vol. 461, col. 1596 (21 2 1949); Vol 483, cols. 1804-1805 (14 7/1952) Vol. 507, cols 184-5 (20/11/1952)
- 39 Hoyer-Millar to E M. Rose, 29 5/1951. PRO, FO371 90979, AU11919 3

- 40 The Daily Worker protested that the American military authorities were issuing 'morality passes to our girls'. See the Daily Worker, 22 4/1952, p. 3, 28/4/1952, p. 2. But the plan in any case was not a great success because usually the GIs, after one meeting, preferred girls they could become 'fresh' with. See paragraph (8) of Survey by Sir George Pirie 24/3/1952. PRO, FO371/97606, AU1195/13.
41. The Economist, 19/4/1952, pp. 145-146; Time, 3/9/1951, p. 34
42. The Times, 22/8/1952, p. 5.
43. Richard Stokes, a Labour Right-wing ex-Minister, hoped the Egyptians would learn from the British how one can endure foreign troops without the feeling of being occupied. See H.C. Debates, Vol. 494, col. 247 (20/11/1951). Bevan, on the other hand, explained that like the British in Egypt, the Americans would have to leave if the local population became actively hostile. See Tribune, 18/12/1953, p. 2.
44. Reynolds, Rich Relations, pp. 144-8.
45. For background and extracts of the 1952 Act see Duke, US Defence Bases, pp. 114-122; 196-197.
- 46 H C. Debates, Vol. 505, col. 1585; cols. 1619-1620 (27/10/1952). In every debate on the legal status of American (and foreign) troops in Britain in the next few years, the Labour Party continued the attack on the Government for its failure to ensure reciprocal treatment for British troops in the United States (or at least admit that this was impossible because of the American Congress - and Constitution) See H C Debates, Vol. 526, cols. 1253-1302 (14/4 1954); Vol. 562, cols 759-783 (13/12/1956)
- 47 Sunday Pictorial, 2 11/52, p. 1.
48. Frank Allaun, LPCR, 1950, p 101. Movers of a call at the 1953 conference to repeal the Visiting Forces Act claimed to do so 'in no vulgar spirit of anti-Americanism ' See LPCR, 1953, p. 155
49. NS&N, 29 11/1952, pp. 627-628.
- 50 Tribune, 20 2/1953, p. 4.
- 51 Socialist Outlook, 14 11 1952, p. 4
- 52 News Chronicle, 30 7 1952, Manchester Guardian, 20 9 1952, 6 11 1952.

- 53 New York Herald Tribune, 3/11/1952, 9/11/1952, New York Times, 29 10/1952; 17/11/1952.
54. Minute by R. Makins, 7/11/1952 PRO, FO371/97607, AU1195/82. For the story of the incident see, the Daily Mirror, 27/9/1952, p. 12.
55. Lady Reading to A. Eden, 31/1/1952; 2/5/1952. PRO, FO371/97606, AU1195/7; AU1195/20
56. H. Thomas to A. Eden, 20/7/1952; PRO, FO371/97607, AU1195/37. Record of Meeting with Selwyn Lloyd, 5/8/1952, Ibid, AU1195/44.
57. R E Barclay to F. Darvall, 28/1/1952. PRO, FO371/97606, AU1195/3.
58. Cabinet conclusions, 25/11/1952. PRO, CAB128/25.
59. Lord de L'Isle to Churchill, 5/12/1952. PRO, FO371/97607, AU1195/84.
- 60 Lord de L'Isle to Churchill, 5/3/1954. PRO, FO371/109142, AU11919/1.
61. Minute by R. Speaight, 15/3/1954. PRO, FO371/109142, AU11919/2.
62. Minute by A R.K. Mackenzie, 27/8/1954. PRO, FO371/109142, AU11919/8.
63. FO Memorandum, 10/7/1957. PRO, FO371/126709, AU11919/15.
64. Eden to Salisbury, 22/12/1951. PRO, FO953/1215, PB1019/15. For the views of Eden during Suez see, Asa Briggs, The History of Broadcasting in the United States, Competition, 1955-1974 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 85-88.
- 65 Whitehall propagandists insisted, however, that publicity from NATO headquarters in Paris should go to the BBC only through the FO. See paragraph (8) of Memorandum on the Exchange of Publicity Material Between NATIS and UK Information Services, 29/8/1951. PRO, FO953/1182, P10331/197. And the idea that the foreign service should carry a regular 'voice of NATO' programme was rejected. See Briggs, Sound and Vision, p. 467.
- 66 Hamilton to R Pelletier, 12/12 1951 PRO, FO953 1215, PB1019 13.
- 67 Briggs, Sound and Vision, p 527.
- 68 In March 1948, the Board of Governors decided to closely monitor Communism on the BBC On 27 July, 1950, they held a special meeting on Communist broadcasts and Communists on the staff. The decision was to exercise 'special vigilance' in the case of the former and to empower 'the Director-General to transfer or suspend members of the staff on grounds of

- security....' On 12 April they decided that though Communism and Communists were still not to be officially banned' and 'proper freedom of speech' was to be preserved, nothing should be done 'which might ultimately endanger the public safety or the continuance of democratic institutions' See BBC Written Archives Centre, Board of Governors Minutes, R1/1/18-19 (1950-1951)
69. Kingsley Martin to Francis Williams, 27/6/1951; 27/7/1951. Francis Williams papers, Churchill College, Cambridge, 8/9. In the next few years, in any case, Martin continued to appear in programmes such as "Any Questions?".
- 70 A series of school broadcasts was published also as a book for the general readership. See The Americans: Ways of Life and Thought (London: Cohen and West, 1956)
71. H. Arbuthnot to H. Agar, 23/6/1952. BBC Written Archives Centre, Talks, File 2, 'Herbert Agar', 1941-1962.
72. Radio Times, 24/10/1952, p. 22. A full transcript of the programme, recorded on 8 August 1952, can be found at the BBC Written Archives Centre.
73. H. Arbuthnot to Chief Assistant, Talks, 23/9/1952. Ibid.
74. In November 1956, the Home Service even started to broadcast a very similar series on 'France, Our Unknown Neighbour'. See Radio Times, 9/11/1956, p. 4
- 75 Soviet Affairs was transmitted from the 19th of October 1949 until the 7th of December 1954.
- 76 Minute by P. Mennell, 27 4/1954. PRO, FO953/1498, PB1071/3.
- 77 A popular daytime programme started in 1946 See Briggs, Sound and Vision, p. 52.
78. D. Ritchie to P. Mennell, 27/5 1954 PRO, FO953 1498, PB1071/3 (A)
- 79 Harman Grisewood to C T., 29/12/1953. BBC Written Archives Centre, Talks, File 1, 'Kenneth Lindsay'
- 80 The Listener, 1/12/1955, pp. 923-924.
- 81 H. Arbuthnot to Green 25/1/1957. BBC Written Archives Centre, Talks, File 1, 'Kenneth Lindsay'
82. Memorandum on meeting held by Lord John Hope, 21 6 1955. PRO, FO953/1601, PG1458 20.
83. Radio Times, 20 3/1953, p 14.

- 84 Daily Herald, 23/2/1954, p. 3 The McCarthy film extracts were shown as part of a short documentary series - 'Americans at Home' - made by the former Labour MP, Aidan Crawley, who had spent three months filming in the United States The BBC also showed in early March Ed Morrow's famous attack on McCarthy in CBS's See it Now, only three days after it was first broadcast in the United States. It was screened again on April 12 with the equally famous reply by McCarthy, introduced by Aidan Crawley. See Radio Times, 9/4/1954, p. 15; p. 20.
85. Briggs, Sound and Vision, p 454.
- 86 London Embassy to State Department, 'Six Monthly Report', 9/10/1950. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511.41/10-950.
87. Minutes of Board of Governors, 10/11/1955. BBC Written Archives Centre, R1/1/23.
88. 'Report by the Director of Television Broadcasting, 1st July - 30th September 1955', G.86/55, p. 7. BBC Written Archives Centre, R1/3/115.
89. Minute by P. Mennel, 19/7/1955. PRO, FO953/1601, PG1458 24.
- 90 Radio Times, 10/2/1956, p 22; 26/7/1957, p 13.
- 91 Christiansen to Beaverbrook, 20/7/1956. Beaverbrook papers, H/185.
92. Memorandum on meeting held by Lord John Hope, 21/6/1955. PRO, FO371/1601, PG1458/20. Concerning the 'serious' press, the pro-Democratic leanings of Alistair Cooke and John Miller of The Times troubled the FO. But Miller, whose objectivity had also been questioned by his new editor Sir William Haley, had already left his post in Washington See McDonald, The History of the Times, p. 243-246.
- 93 R. Speaight to A.C.E. Malcolm, 23/11/1950. PRO, FO953 840, PG17938 8.
- 94 Chancellor to P L. Carter, 4 12/1950 PRO, FO953/840, PG17938 8
- 95 Donald Read, The Power of News: The History of Reuters, 1849-1989 (Oxford. Oxford University Press, 1992), p 256.
- 96 Patrick O'Sheel to State Department, 'Report on Labor Information Activities, Britain', 25 7 1951. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-1954, Box 2353, 511 41 7-2651
- 97 NS&N, 19 5/1951, p 553.

- 98 American Embassy to State Department, 'IE: Semi-annual Evaluation Report, June 1 - November 30, 1951', 21/1/1952. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2353, 511.41/1-2152.
- 99 Report by Joseph Evans, 'USIS London - Semi-Annual Evaluation Report - December 1, 1952, to May 30, 1953', 3/9/1953 NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 2354, 511.41/9-353. See News Chronicle, 27/2/1953, p 4, and above chapter 4, p. 159.
- 100 George Kent, 'Report on GIs in Britain', The Reader's Digest (October 1953), p. 2. See also Jean Rikhoff Hills, 'The British Press on "the Yanks"', New Republic, 23/8/1954, pp. 9-12.
- 101 Time, 2/2/1953, p. 54-55; Sunday Pictorial, 11/1/1953, p. 7.
102. Daily Mirror, 29/7/1953, pp. 6-7
103. New Republic, 13/9/1954, p. 23.
104. Daily Express, 19/7/1954, p. 4.
105. Daily Express, 10/8/1954, p. 1.
106. A. Irving to H. Kellerman, 18/8/1954. NA, RG 59, Decimal File 1950-54, Box 5911, 941.61/8-1854.
- 107 Minute by Peter Mennell, 12/10 1954. PRO, FO371/109142, AU11919/11
108. Minute by W. Ridsdale, 4/11/1952. PRO, FO371/97607, AU1195 60.
109. Minute by J. Boyd, 29/10/1952 PRO, FO371/97607, AU1195 60 See Daily Graphic, 29/10/1952, p 4.
110. N. Gaydon to J. Boyd, 14/10/1952. PRO, FO 371 97607, AU1193/60.
- 111 Daily Mirror, 9/10/1952, p. 1.
- 112 N. Gaydon to J. Boyd, 14/10/1952. PRO, FO 371 97607, AU1193/60.
- 113 Minute by J. Boyd, 19 11/1952 PRO, FO371/97607, AU1195 71
- 114 Daily Mirror, 10 5 1954, p. 1, Minute by Peter Mennell, 12/10 1954. PRO, FO371/109142, AU11919/11 Not surprisingly, the articles which admitted that American policies were causing anxiety and alarm in Britain were praised in Pravda too See PRO, FO371/109116, 1054 11.
- 115 Daily Mirror, 10 5/1954, pp. 8-9; 11 5 1954, pp. 8-9.

- 116 Henry Brandon of the Sunday Times and Alex Faulkner of the Daily Telegraph were to be approached instead. See Minute by Peter Mennell, 19/7/1955. PRO, FO953, 1601, PG1458/24.
- 117 R. Makins to Selwyn Lloyd, 27/11/1956. PRO, PREM11/2189.
- 118 Minute by Allan Noble, 28/11/1956 PRO, FO371/120334, AU1051/44.
- 119 See for example the Daily Mail, 11/12/1956, p 1
120. Kyle, Suez, p. 543.
- 121 Epstein, Britain, pp. 196-197. Russett, Community and Contention, pp. 213-214n.
122. Drew Middleton, 'American Tourists Are Told to Expect Changes in Britain', New York Times, 20/5/1957, p. 1; 'The Anti-U.S. Sentiment', New York Times, 6/1/1958. See report of Adlai Stevenson's speech in The Times, 25/5/1957, p. 4.
123. Minute by A.N. MacCleary, 29/5 1957. PRO, FO371/126684, AU1051/61.
124. Gore-Booth thought that mention of 'anti-American emotion' could be used to encourage the Americans 'to help us keep public opinion sweet by making concessions or at least showing sympathetic and explicit understanding in respect of the few subjects in which their attitude is most likely to be criticised ' See P. Gore-Booth to H. Caccia, 12/2/1958. PRO, FO371/132330, AU1051/3.
125. Ibid.
126. Memorandum by H.A.A. Hankey, 23/1/1958. PRO, FO371/132330, AU1051/3. After a nuclear bomb was reported to have fallen from a plane in Florence, South Carolina, the Daily Mail asked in a headline 'IS CAROLINA ON YOUR MIND?' and the Daily Sketch urged the Americans to 'keep it But keep it on the ground ' Quoted in Time, 24 3 1958, p. 20.
127. J A Macleod to N. Bicknell, 15 1/1959. PRO, FO371/139756, AU1051 2
- 128 Minute by R E. Parsons, 26/1 1959 Ibid
- 129 Minute by C G James, 30/1/1959. Ibid.
- 130 Minute by C C. Parrot, 4 2/1959 Ibid
131. Minute by B M. Gill, 10 2 1959 Ibid.
132. N. Bicknell to J A Macleod, 25 2 1959. Ibid
- 133 Time, 4 5 1959, pp. 27-28.

- 134 Minute by P. Gore-Booth, 17/6/1959. PRO, FO371/139756, AU1051/16.
135. Minute by R.E. Parsons, 22/6/1959 Ibid.
- 136 H A. Hankey, 'Anti-American Feeling in the U.K.', 1/7/1959. Ibid
- 137 Minute by R E. Parsons, 22/6/1959. PRO, FO371/139756, AU1051/16.
- 138 Minute by P H.G. Wright, 25/6/1959. PRO, FO371/139756, AU1682/16.
- 139 Minute by R. Murray, 11/8/1959. PRO, FO371/139756, AU1051/17
140. Special Report on 'Some Aspects of the U.S. Image in Great Britain and the Influence of the Mass Media', October 1959, p. 69, p. 72. NA, RG 306, Records of the United States Information Agency, Office of Research, Special Reports, 1953 63 (1959), Box 17
- 141 Ibid, p. 13; pp. 21-22.
142. Ibid, p. 30; p. 33.
143. Ibid, pp. 1-5; p. 43; p. 46; p. 50, p. 60; p. 73.
144. Ibid, p. 7.

Conclusion

The focus of this research has been 'anti-Americanism' in Britain in the first postwar decade. It has targeted more specifically the attitudes towards the United States of the British Left, which came to be regarded in this period as the most 'anti-American' element in British political life. And it has also considered some of the responses of policy-makers on both sides of the Atlantic to British 'anti-Americanism'.

The term 'anti-Americanism' has been used to summarize a vast and sometimes contradicting complex of negative images of American life and hostile attitudes to American power and influence. The starting point of this study was therefore the tracing of when and in what context the term was used by contemporaries. This linguistic enquiry revealed that while hostility to American political, economic and cultural influence was evident in Britain long before 1945, 'anti-Americanism' only became a widely-used term with a remarkable emotional content during the course of the first postwar decade. The frequency of its use immediately after World War Two and its impact ever since, suggested possibly a special phenomenon, which this research, centred on the period 1945-1956, has endeavoured to describe and understand. British encounters with American postwar influence in the period under discussion have been wide and varied. This work has therefore chosen to focus on the attitudes towards the United States of the organized political Left, which in this period meant primarily the Labour Party. It was the Left in Britain that was chiefly accused of 'anti-Americanism', a label that was used in British politics in a pejorative sense and not worn on any political lapel as a badge of

honour Examining the validity of this charge served to apply intellectual rigour to a multifarious political and cultural phenomenon

How guilty was the British Left of what Kingsley Martin called 'the strange new sin of anti-Americanism'? The United States was a capitalist power and the long-perceived social st images of the demons and dangers of Wall Street and American Big Business became magnified after 1945 by Britain's dependence on them. Ideological prejudices were reinforced by sentiments of patriotic pride that had become acceptable on the Left now that the socialists, and not the Tories, were in charge of Britain's destiny. Out of the ruins of World War Two, British Labour was at long last to cure the ills of capitalist exploitation by building a welfare state that would provide a magnificent example of social justice to the world, especially to Americans, many of whom showed great animosity to British Labour. However, at least in the short run socialist policies seemed to be dependent on dollar aid from American capitalism. And that this financial fact of life was happily emphasized by the Conservative opposition caused the resentment of dependence on the United States to be felt all the more poignantly on the Left. The hostile rhetoric which resulted was further sharpened by partisan polemics in the domestic political debate with the Conservatives Tory arguments that American prowess proved the benefits of capitalist private enterprise precipitated the need in Labour Party circles to highlight the less savoury aspects of American domestic life and warn of the possible disaster that an inevitable American recession would spell to the world

Yet despite fears that an American recession would be damaging to Britain, or that Labour's socialist advance might be compromised by political and economic pressures coming from across the Atlantic, the Labour Government was reluctant y

pushed towards a military alliance with the United States to counter what was believed to be a much greater threat from the Soviet Union. To Ernest Bevin and his supporters, the vagaries of American capitalism, the doubts about the wisdom of American power, and the excesses of anti-Communism displayed in American foreign policy and domestic life, were all secondary to anti-Soviet considerations and the need to use American power to bolster Britain's threatened global interests and Cold War defences.

Britain's alliance with the United States in a world dividing along ideological and strategic lines between East and West not surprisingly became the most divisive issue on the Left in the next decade. Many on the Labour Left found it practically impossible to accept that British Labour had aligned itself with American capitalism against a growing group of States calling themselves socialist and free of capitalist or colonial exploitation. Even those in the Keep Left faction of the Labour Left who had overcome the old socialist sentimentality about Soviet communism, regarded Bevin's foreign policy as a betrayal of socialist principles and the forfeiture of Britain's ability to act independently in world affairs by providing a 'social-democratic' alternative to both superpowers. The Labour Left's belief that Britain could provide 'moral leadership' to a grateful world was a delusion of grandeur which dominated thinking on the Left from the Keep Left revolt of 1946-1947 to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the late 1950s and beyond.

This emotional clinging to the symbols and slogans of the past and refusal to accept Britain's reduced postwar status was no less apparent, of course, on the other side of the political spectrum. Until 1945, the Conservatives displayed the greatest hostility to American economic 'imperialism' and were the most

determined to defend Britain and her Empire from the American challenge. Such sentiments were muted among Tories after the outbreak of the Cold War and what they perceived was the greater threat from the East. The Tories found it easier than the Left to accept the anti-Communist thrust in American policies, but they harboured equal resentment of dependence on the United States and dislike of admitting that leadership had passed from their own country to another. However, Tory disappointments and fears were mostly kept private, while in public they followed faithfully the line laid down by Churchill of heaping praise on everything the Americans did. Attitudes to be known have to be expressed, only the Tory popular press could be accused of 'anti-Americanism' for openly expressing the hurt pride of a nation which found itself, while still a world power, forced by the Cold War to continually do the bidding of a stronger ally. But when Eisenhower's Administration informed Eden's Government during the Suez crisis that the days of British gun-boat diplomacy were finally over, the eruption of emotions in the Party of the Empire provided in one brief postwar moment any proof needed that hostility to American foreign policy, and resentment of Britain's domination and displacement by the United States, were at least as strong on the Right as they were on the British Left

Still, the contemporary ideas on both sides of the Atlantic of what constituted 'anti-Americanism' were mainly relatively simple: these were ideological hostility to American capitalism, and especially objections or doubts about the wisdom of the Anglo-American Cold War alliance. As the Communists in Britain were a negligible force, it was the Left-wing of the Labour Party that from 1946 posed the main challenge to the Atlantic alliance in British politics, and was thus increasingly

accused on both sides of the Atlantic of being 'anti-American'. In the United States, the British Left was pilloried by an American media that equated 'Left' with 'subversion' and viewed support for American anti-Communist foreign policies as the defining prism through which the world was divided into friends and enemies.

In Britain, the 'anti-Americanism' of the Labour Left was lambasted too by an Atlanticist consensus of Tories, Liberals, and Ernest Bevin's supporters in the trade unions and Right-wing of the Labour Party. Although this broad consensus shared a great deal of the resentment openly expressed on the Labour Left at Britain's postwar dependence on the United States, it believed that Cold War circumstances left Britain no alternative but to shelter under American power. Furthermore, it feared that the result of the 'anti-Americanism' of the Left would be to encourage the isolationist forces in the United States who urged an American withdrawal from Europe: the ultimate Atlanticist nightmare. It was thus an attitude that was *rational* anti-anti-American, but not necessarily *emotionally* 'pro-American', a label which like 'anti-American', was a simplistic tag that belied the complexity of British attitudes to American postwar influence.

Consider the reactions on both sides of the political spectrum to American cultural power. There was much truth in J. B. Priestley's claim that some of the most blatant feelings of animosity to what the United States had on offer to the world could be expressed by the most loyal supporters of the Anglo-American alliance. Hostility to American mass culture, which continued to flood the country in the first postwar decade, seemed to unite both Left and Right in defence of British national identity and culture. The mostly middle-class leaders of the Labour Left had a particular ideological axe to grind against the flow of commercial

products and cultural images which was making Britain and the whole world safe for consumer capitalism and mass culture on American lines. But on the Labour Right-wing, only the Gaitskelites matched acceptance of American political leadership with an understanding of the inevitable tide of social and cultural change that was reaching across the Atlantic and transforming life for the British masses. Other Atlanticists such as Herbert Morrison and Christopher Mayhew openly inveighed against the menace of 'Americanism', while many Conservatives not only did not hasten to castigate these attacks on the culture and manners of the American allies but actually indulged in a great deal of it themselves.

The fact was that 'anti-Americanism' had become used on both sides of the Atlantic chiefly to describe 'political' attitudes, often simply to explain the British Left's disagreements with American foreign policy or disapproval of the conduct or utterances of American politicians, who were vigorously criticized in the United States too. The critics of the Left claimed that it was also prejudiced ideologically to expect the worse in American life. Yet in this respect, too, to label the British Left as 'anti-American' only on account of its hostility to American capitalism, great as it was, is to miss the real emotional confusion on the Left concerning America.

Historically, the British Left had inherited an idealistic vision of the New World that was held in the very same frame as its perception of the evils of capitalism and American war-mongering. The alliance with the progressive forces on the other side of the Atlantic, from which the British Left derived much of its politics and radical culture, always renewed faith in American idealism. However, the litmus test that the British Left applied to measure the strength or otherwise of American

progressive forces was its assessment of key events and the policies of current Administrations. Thus the Marshall Plan, Truman's election victory in 1948, the launch of the Fair Deal and the Point Four foreign aid programme occasioned an improvement of opinion about the United States. It was now possible for all but the most rigid marxians of the non-Communist Left to emphasize the fact that the United States was not only 'capitalist', but also a democracy based on values and traditions which both nations shared in common. This was a perception that helped to sweeten the bitter pill of NATO which the Left was forced to swallow in 1949. On the other hand, when during the Korean war and the rearmament programmes that came in its wake, Truman's Administration seemed to cower under the anti-Communist belligerency of MacArthur and McCarthy, the image of the United States as capitalist and reactionary was resurrected in a way that rekindled the Left's earlier suspicions and hostility.

All the resentment and fear of American power released on the Left by Korea and rearmament was channelled into the Bevanite dispute which gripped the Labour Party in the early 1950s. In Bevanism there was the ideological hostility to American capitalism, despair at the failure of American idealism, and the frustrated nationalism of a nation which had become dependent on a stronger ally. In his public calls to stand up to America, Bevan successfully appealed to many Labour supporters, those who viewed with particular anxiety the prospects of another war and to whom no matter how great was the threat of the Soviet Union, 'capitalist America' was still the traditional foe. This was the cause of particular alarm to the anti-anti-Americans of the Labour right-wing, led by Hugh Gaitskell. They believed that Bevan's tendency to equate 'America' with Wall Street, and his fierce criticism

of American foreign policy, too close for comfort to Communist propaganda, were an irresponsible and opportunistic attempt to ride to power on the prejudices and fears of the Labour Party rank and file

The 'strange new sin of anti-Americanism' became in these years one of the most talked-about issues in Anglo-American relations and British politics and Aneurin Bevan was regarded of course as the chief sinner. However, 'anti-Americanism' had become by now so loosely-applied to any criticism of the United States that even Attlee, who had supervised with Ernest Bevin the building of the Anglo-American Cold War alliance, was now accused of 'anti-Americanism' when he dared to openly question the wisdom of American policies and attitudes towards China. Attlee, like Bevan and everybody else on the Left, did not like the label of 'anti-Americanism'. It implied chauvinist prejudice with which nobody wanted to be associated - the Conservatives too would object to it at the time of Suez. Yet the fact that the discourse of British politics had become permeated to such an extent by the term 'anti-Americanism', and the strong emotions which it aroused, demonstrated how America-conscious the British had become. It also emphasized how central yet problematic was the role of the United States in British political life, much like that of Britain's relationship with 'Europe' half a century later

Yet how significant was British 'anti-Americanism' in the first postwar decade? National sentiments were always hard to quantify but detailed surveys carried out from time to time emphasized that despite understandable resentment at Britain's domination and displacement, and the dislike or mistrust of American power, more British people rather than fewer had a favourable attitude towards the American allies, their way of life and culture. Certainly the British preferred to be a junior-

partner of the United States, though most of them would probably not see it that way, rather than face Moscow alone.

But 'anti-Americanism' was nevertheless regarded at the time as a serious threat to the Anglo-American Cold War alliance. This could be seen in the anti-anti-American plans drawn up by Washington, Whitehall, and all the various supporters of the Atlantic alliance, who dominated Britain's political life and media, to counter the ignorance, prejudice and negative images on which it fed. In the Cold War battle for minds and hearts, the British people, and in particular the suspected British Left, were to be taught to disregard Communist propaganda, overcome any 'anti-American' prejudice they might harbour, and learn how to like the American allies even more. In this respect anti-anti-Americanism, and not the 'anti-Americanism' which it aimed to cure, proved in the 1940s and 1950s to be the most powerful British emotion concerning Anglo-American relations

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